Commentary
Volume Sixty-five, Number One, January 1978

WHY ARMS CONTROL HAS FAILED

Edward N. Luttwak

EDMUND WILSON VS. AMERICA / Robert Alter

SOVIET PSYCHIATRY ON TRIAL / Walter Reich

McGOVERNISM WITHOUT McGOVERN / Chalmers Johnson

TINY GORILLAS—A STORY / Meredith Sue Willis

MUSIC: Performing the "Ring" / Samuel Lipman

FICTION: New Israeli Writing / Alan Mintz

BOOKS: Charles Horner / Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. / Michael Ledeen
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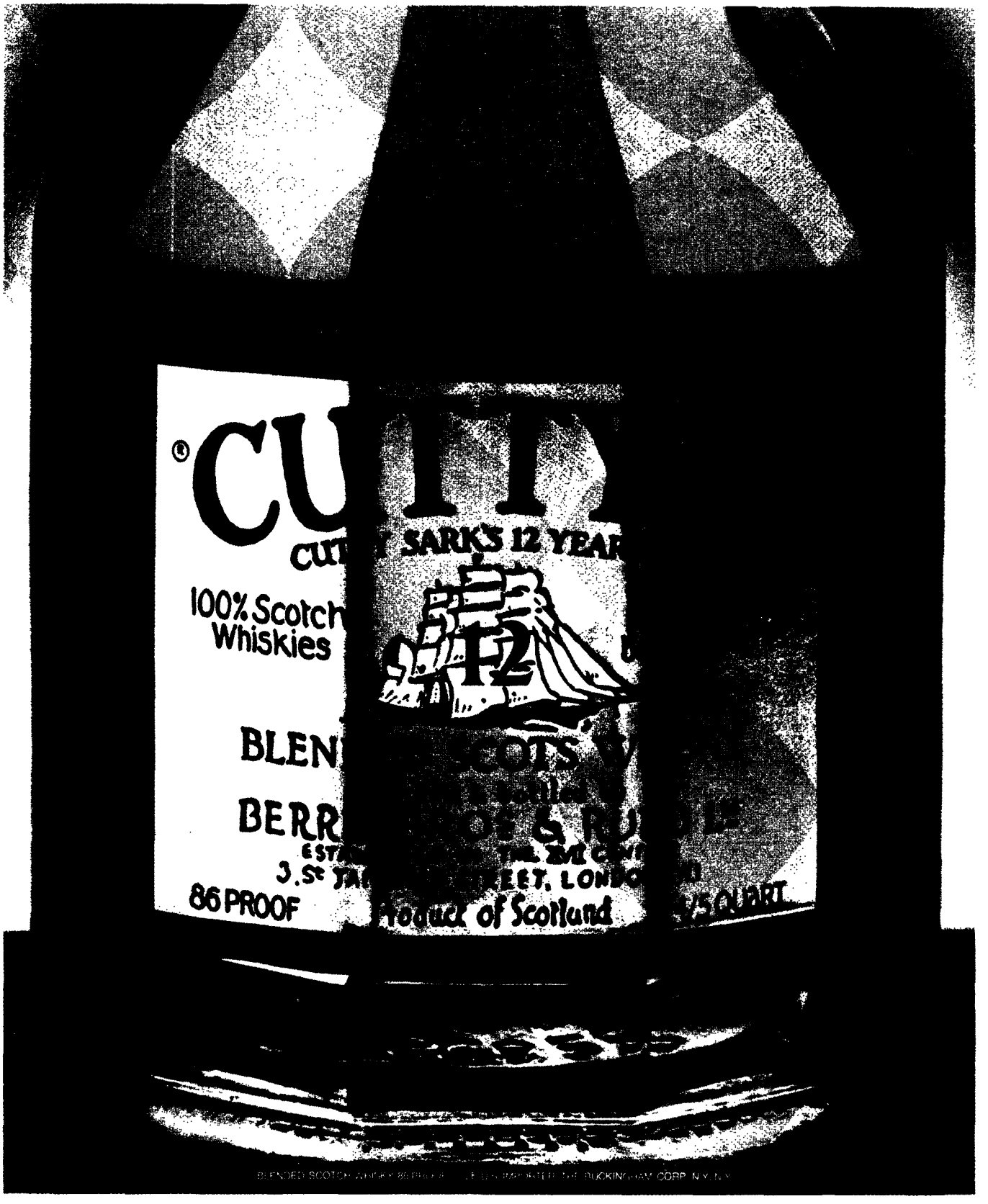

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Commentary

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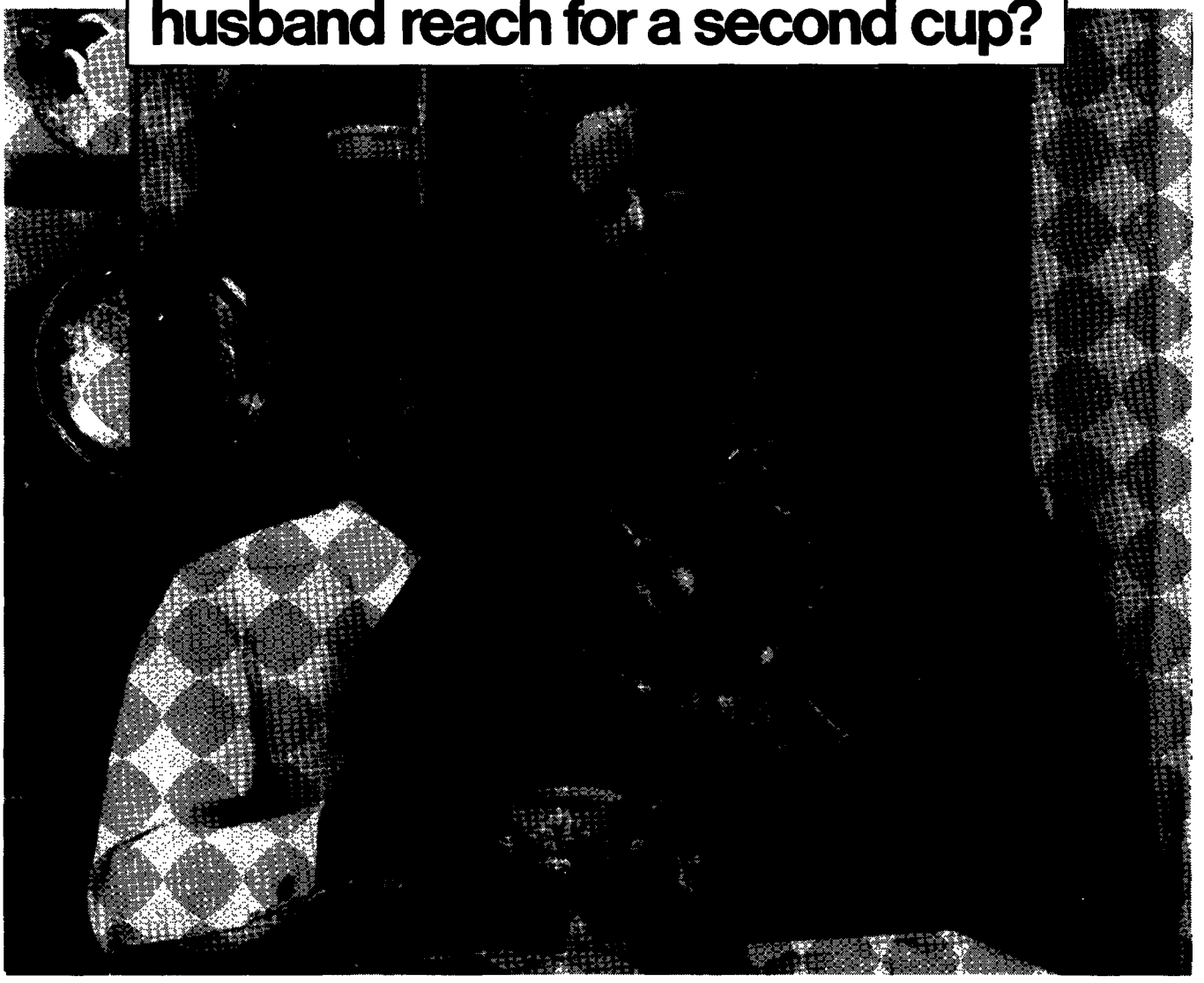

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Letters from Readers

Quebec's Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse and Irwin Cotler's article on the present situation of the Jewish population in Quebec ["Quebec's Jews: Caught in the Middle," September 1977] . . . is one of the many manifestations of the state of panic of the Anglophone communities in *"la belle province"* today. The article, however, is biased, sometimes by omission, . . . sometimes by misinterpretation, . . . and sometimes by outright error. This rejoinder will follow the article step by step and attempt to show its faults.

Mrs. Wisse and Mr. Cotler assert that "Quebec's climate of candid ethnicity had made Montreal . . . an increasingly polyglot, cosmopolitan center hospitable to groups (like the Jews) that could readily maintain their distinctiveness." The essay then tries to show that the election of the *Parti Québécois* has changed this atmosphere. It is possible that Mrs. Wisse and Mr. Cotler are recent newcomers to Montreal, or know little of the history of Quebec, for there are numerous examples of past and present discrimination and, to say the least, lack of "hospitality" toward the Jews. A strong anti-Semitic trend, often fostered by the Catholic Church, had been present in the French-Canadian population up to the changes of the 1950's; undercurrents of this trend remain in the colloquialisms of many French Canadians: *"Tu es un vrai juif"* ("You are a real Jew") means that one is very cheap, for instance. . . . The situation has never been as rosy as the two writers pretend. The Catholic Church also used anti-Semitism as a means of maintaining its control over, as well as maintaining the cohesion of, the French populace, *"les maudits juifs"* ("the damned Jews") being often linked to *"les maudits anglais"* ("the damned English").

French-Canadian nationalism was often in the past a defense by an oppressed majority in a minority situation and it exhibited a very strong reactionary tendency. But the present *Parti Québécois,* which . . . has a reformist socialist ideology, should not be completely and carelessly identified with past French-Canadian nationalism.

One should also stress that the Francophone *Québécois* were not the only ones to be anti-Semitic. Anglophones were often more discreet, but nonetheless discriminatory. One still hears the English phrase, "You Jewed me." . . . In addition, at McGill, the major Anglophone university, a "Jewish quota" existed in the most prestigious departments, and Jews needed better grades than Gentiles to be admitted. . . . Many Jewish students still believe, rightly or wrongly, that they need better grades to be admitted to the most prestigious English universities. . . .

Mrs. Wisse and Mr. Cotler seem to ignore the fact that in public elementary and secondary schools, Jews were treated, for school matters, as Protestant . . . only after a series of court battles, because the Protestant system was very reluctant to accept poor Jewish immigrants, and that Jews were often discriminated against . . . by both the school system and the courts. . . .

Until the last two decades the Quebec government was never very liberal. . . . Quebec has rarely been . . . the haven of political tolerance the authors would have us believe. Politically repressive laws and actions were aimed at destroying left-wing, mostly Anglophone, movements, and especially the trade-union movement in which Jewish workers and intellectuals were often involved. . . .

The authors also claim that "the outward looking, progressive, 'Quiet Revolution' [has given] way to the defensive 'new society.'" But this statement does not take into account the social program of the *Parti Québécois,* which is much more advanced than the "reforms" of the "Quiet Revolution"; it also ignores the fact that the "Quiet Revolution" failed in many respects, and even increased the domination of big business, as Fournier's *The Quebec Establishment* has shown.

The authors also refuse to attempt an explanation of the causes of Jewish bilingualism and, to a certain extent, some of the roots of French-Canadian anti-Semitism. Jews as a group in Quebec became bilingual because they had to. Most of their income derived from the French Canadians, for Jews were often small shopkeepers and small landlords. Thus Jews were often perceived as direct exploiters

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(the situation of the Jews in Quebec, as a kind of "middleman minority," is comparable to their situation in black ghettos in the U.S., and I believe that a similar explanation could be given of French-Canadian anti-Semitism as of black anti-Semitism in the U.S.). Jews have become professionals only in the past two decades. . . .

Some assertions in Mrs. Wisse's and Mr. Cotler's article are simply false, and, moreover, quite racist. The song of the *Parti Québécois*, *"Demain nous appartient"* ("Tomorrow Belongs to Us," not "to me," as they state in the article), is not the Nazi party song from *Cabaret*. Before making such a grave misstatement, the authors could have checked, as I did, with the *Parti Québécois* headquarters in Montreal. The song was written and composed in 1975 by Stéphane Venne. I do not believe that it bears any resemblance to any song in *Cabaret*. This kind of defamation is a Nazi tactic, and, even for a good cause, weakens the argument. It implies that the *Québécois* have Nazi sympathies, denigrates them on the basis of wrong evidence, and gives ammunition to those who believe that Anglophones wish to downgrade the *Québécois*.

The authors also fail to mention the fact that the Quebec government has given its minorities many more facilities in the last decades than the governments of other Canadian provinces. In the field of education, a provincial matter, the Quebec government subsidizes private ethnic or religious schools to a greater degree, and in a much more liberal way, than the other provinces, with the possible exception of Newfoundland. That the language of instruction, except for the specific language of the ethnic group for religious studies, now has to be French comes from the adoption of Bill 101 last August. This bill makes French the only official language of the province, and corresponds to the legislation and practices of the other provinces, which have made English the only language of social life, *de facto* or *de jure*. Only in the last decade has the Canadian federal government attempted to give French equal status with English (French and English are the two official languages of the country), but in fact many of the provincial and local governments have actively discriminated against French. What Quebec is now doing is in line with the activities of the rest of Canada. . . .

Mrs. Wisse and Mr. Cotler assume that the Francophone and the Anglophone Jewish communities of Montreal form one community. . . . My assertion is that, as with other ethnic groups divided along language lines, the two communities are socially quite separate and communicate little. . . . It is doubtful that Francophone Jews, who do not have the same language for everyday life, or the same private schools, or the same places of worship, are very close to Anglophone Jews.

In a situation as sensitive as the present one, omission and prejudiced errors have an extremely damaging effect. As evidence of bad faith, they show a certain insensitivity and may create, for outsiders, a detrimental image of the Jewish community.

MICHEL LAFERRIÈRE
Director, FCAC Minority
Education Research Project
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Ruth R. Wisse and Irwin Cotler must know that if the Jewish community of Montreal is "perhaps the most vigorous of North America," it is because of the benevolence and tolerance of the whole population. The Jews prospered in Montreal in spite of the fact that they turned their back on our people and chose to align themselves with the dominant Wasp group, thus adding to the forces eroding our identity right in the middle of our French province.

But this situation could not go on forever, unless the French Canadians chose to disappear like all the other ethnic minorities of North America. Right or wrong, we believe that the leaders of the satellite minorities who gravitated around the Wasps of Quebec were sure that we would eventually resign ourselves to cultural genocide. But we did not, thus upsetting their plans. Our language is our color.

When the authors say that the Jewish schools in Quebec must continue to Anglicize the children of the French-speaking North African Jews in order to create "an integrated community of its two subgroups," and that "the Quebec Jews regard English as a cultural gateway essential to Jewish self-expression," in order not to be isolated from continental Jewry, they must know that this is absolutely unacceptable to French Canadians. It is no more palatable than if Chicanos refused to learn English under the pretense that they needed to communicate with their kin south of the border. They also know (but do not say) that English is taught in French schools. The members of René Lévesque's government are all fully bilingual, as is the whole population of Montreal and most of the educated people in the province of Quebec.

Does the federal government of the United States give grants to Jewish schools as our Quebec government does? Moreover, the English-speaking minority of Quebec (including the Jews) enjoys a complete set of separate educational institutions from grade school to university, with four universities for 20 per cent of the population, while the remaining 80 per cent of the population also have four universities. They also possess a full network of other community institutions such as newspapers, television and radio stations, libraries, hospitals, museums, concert halls, etc., not to mention owning 90 per cent of the economy of the province. Furthermore, up till now the English-speaking minority had the power to impose its language on the majority, which, of course, it did. . . .

Our two authors, professors at McGill University (a colonial British bastion if ever there was one), expect the "French-Canadian elite" to dissociate itself from all that is said by the lunatic leftist groups here. But whatever the leaders of the Teachers' Union declared about Zionism and racism will *not* be "repudiated" by anybody. For the time being, this organization has been captured by a Maoist fringe group, and it is up to the members of the organization to get rid of them. This will happen sooner or later because they oppose the independence movement. . . . The Quebec government and the population in general cannot be held responsible for the pronouncements of all small anarchist groups which attract a handful of our young people.

If Mrs. Wisse and Mr. Cotler already hear Nazi boots on the sidewalks of Montreal, that is really their personal problem. They are unable to cite a single declaration or a single action by the Lévesque government against the Jews. . . .

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There is no justification for the authors' fears that the *Parti Québécois* will become a Nazi movement—its Jewish members will certainly have their say in that evolution.

I am not a member of the *Parti Québécois*, but I am really surprised and saddened by this groundless and unwarranted attack. It can only appear to us as a move to vilify our national-liberation movement in foreign countries. I do not think it will help to maintain the *entente cordiale* between the Jewish community of Montreal and the new government of Quebec.

RAOUL ROY

Montreal, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse and Irwin Cotler describe my song, *"Demain nous appartient,"* as a "French version of 'Tomorrow Belongs To Me,' the Nazi party song from *Cabaret*. . . ." It seems to me that the record should be set straight: five mistakes in two lines of text would seem a few too many.

1. The song included in the sound track of *Cabaret* is not a Nazi party song. It was written for the film by John Kander and Fred Ebb in 1972.

2. My song, for anyone who is not tone-deaf, bears no resemblance to the *Cabaret* song, and it is obviously not a "French version" of it, as the authors state, nor is it a take-off.

3. No English translation of my song has ever been permitted, and no French translation of the song from *Cabaret* has ever been permitted. A so-called "version" would be an infringement of Canadian and American copyright laws. I certainly would not commit such an infringement: I happen to be president of the Composers, Authors, and Publishers Association of Canada (CAPAC).

4. "Tomorrow Belongs to Me" is certainly not translated into French as *"Demain nous appartient"* ("Tomorrow Belongs to Us").

5. Since copyright laws throughout the world do not apply to the title of a work but only to its substance, anyone with even a minimal knowledge of musical matters would not make comparisons on the basis of titles alone.

May I express, finally, my concern and astonishment over this matter and over the article as a whole. I would have expected . . . a more serious treatment of the grave matters that the people of Quebec must solve in the years ahead.

STÉPHANE VENNE

Montreal, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Contrary to Ruth R. Wisse and Irwin Cotler's assertions, the Quebec of yesterday did not bask in "a climate of candid ethnicity . . . hospitable to groups (like the Jews). . . ." Nor was Quebec an outpost of "cultural pluralism." A prerequisite of cultural pluralism . . . is a common language which leads to mutual understanding and respect among different ethnic groups. Quebec, of course, lacked a common language of communication; it was an enclave of distinct ethnic groups which feared and hence shunned one another. Quebec has long been a land of cultural "solitudes." In the 1960's, the bitterness engendered by this ethnic tension inspired members of the French group to engage in incidents of kidnapping, bomb-throwing, and rioting.

How did the Jews fit into all this? There were, admittedly, few violent acts directed against them. Nonetheless, the Nazi movement of the 1930's won a larger following in Quebec than anywhere else in North America. . . . Relations between the Jewish community and the Anglo-Protestant community in Quebec were also strained. . . .

Largely in response to the climate of ethnic exclusivism, Quebec's Jews built a community that was, as the authors phrase it, "more vigorous than any other in North America." But life was not all roses for Quebec Jews. Neither Jews nor, for that matter, Anglo-Protestants have ever, for instance, played a significant role in Quebec's public life. While Toronto,

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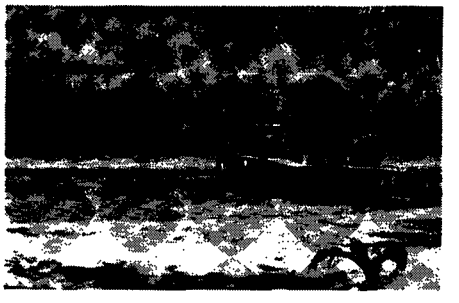

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which has a Jewish population that is smaller than Montreal's, has had its Jewish mayors, Montreal Jews have had to settle for the occasional alderman. Indeed, Quebec Jews with political ambitions—David Lewis and Stuart Smith come to mind—were forced to leave Quebec in order to participate in public life. Quebec Jews, moreover, have never been as much a part of cultural life in their place of residence as American Jews have been in America.

If Quebec Jewry's past is not rosy, then its future is not as bleak as Mrs. Wisse and Mr. Cotler imply. They fault René Lévesque, and French Quebecers in general, for a "callous indifference to Jewish sensibilities. . . ." But . . . French Quebec has had little prior experience in dealing with other ethnic groups; unlike the rest of North America, it has never had to carry the burden of accepting immigrants into its fold, and is thus naturally "insensitive." A more pertinent question that deserves to be addressed is, how can Quebec Jewry initiate the process of sensitizing French Quebec to its concerns?

To be sure, Quebec is not without its leftist elements which, as the authors state, threaten the Jewish community by supporting Palestinian terrorism and attacking economic freedom. But surely these radicals are in the minority. And it is the task of Quebec's Jews to give their support to more responsible elements in Quebec—French Quebec business in particular—which are ready to expose the dangerous nature of leftist illusions.

Although Quebec Jewry has no guarantee of success in its efforts to sensitize French Quebec to its concerns and to integrate into a new Quebec whose *lingua franca* will be French, the attempt must be made. For the majority of Quebec Jewry cannot travel as lightly as those "talented young professionals" to whom the authors refer. . . . And those Quebec Jews who choose to labor for the survival of their vigorous community . . . are not, in the formulation offered by Mrs. Wisse and Mr. Cotler, "standing poised, waiting to see which way the wind will blow." Rather, they are actively trying to influence the course of their community's history.

ALLAN KAGEDAN KAGE
New York City

RUTH R. WISSE and IRWIN COTLER write:

Our correspondents suggest, in varying degree, that our treatment of Quebec's Jews prior to the victory of the *Parti Québécois* in November 1976 was incomplete and not sufficiently critical, while that of the post-election period remained incomplete and was unduly harsh. But if things were never as good as some have made them out to be, or as bad as they are now sometimes perceived to be, that is somewhat beside the point. For we did not set out to write a historical analysis or a comparative political tract. Since the two of us differ between ourselves as to both the nature of the political reality and its long-range impact on Quebec and Quebec Jewry, we would hardly have undertaken a joint effort on these subjects. Our intention was to convey a sense of the mood resulting from, if not shaped by, what commentators have called Quebec's "earthquake."

If, as some *Québécois* have said, the question is not so much what does Quebec want, but what does Quebec *feel*, the same question can be asked of Quebec's Jews. Clearly, the attitudes and feelings in the Jewish community are not monolithic, but anyone who has attended the various public airings of private anxieties cannot be indifferent to the individual and collective *angst* that now finds expression. This sense of anxiety—depreciated by the correspondents—was the central motif of our article. And indeed, some statements of Raoul Roy and Michel Laferrière may contribute, however inadvertently, to stimulating it further.

Mr. Laferrière characterizes our article as one of the "many manifestations of the state of panic" in the Anglophone community today. One might argue that if there *are* "many manifestations," this suggests something about an apprehended reality which is not necessarily mollified when it is dismissed as panic. Quebec Jews might be well advised to be *engagé* rather than *enragé* or *immobilisé*, but a greater sensitivity to their anxiety on the part of Mr. Laferrière and others—a sensitivity they rightly wish extended to French-Canadian aspirations—would be helpful in changing the atmosphere.

Mr. Laferrière faults us for ignoring the history of anti-Semitism in Quebec, while elsewhere, somewhat contradictorily, he imputes a "Jewish" bias to our treatment of French Canadians. Indeed, we intentionally excluded reference to a phenomenon with which we are hardly unfamiliar, as we did not wish to have adverse inferences drawn regarding French Canadians generally, preferring to note for the record that "there has never been any institutionalized . . . anti-Semitism in Quebec." It is not we but he who "carelessly identifies" nationalism with the matter of anti-Semitism by discussing both simultaneously. (Incidentally, we are both native Quebecers who grew up in the province, not "recent arrivals" as Mr. Laferrière seems to assume.)

This is not to say that there are no remembrances of the past among Jews, including of those issues alluded to by Mr. Laferrière and Allan Kagedan Kage. When these remembrances are grafted on to memories of the *European* past, and serve as a prism through which present events are filtered, perceptions are generated which, whether or not they are grounded in reality, have a "reality" of their own.

This is precisely the context in which the response to the singing of the song, "Tomorrow Belongs to Us," must be viewed and understood. We were describing a felt anxiety—particularly among Jews—at the party's emotionally charged victory celebration. We did not intend to suggest, nor did we suggest, that the *Parti Québécois* is "Nazi-like" in its policies, platforms, or pronouncements. It is a fact, as Mr. Venne justifiably emphasizes, that the song sung in celebration that evening was not the song of Nazi youth in *Cabaret*; but it is also a fact that many viewers—by no means only Jews—perceived it as such, and that some of the media, however mistakenly, so characterized it that evening and have so characterized it since. As for the difference in pronoun, "Tomorrow Belongs to *Us*" may appear more threatening still to those who feel threatened because excluded.

Mr. Laferrière asserts, as if he were responding to our analysis, that "Francophone *Québécois* were not the only ones to be anti-Semitic. Anglophones were often more discreet, but nonetheless discriminatory." We neither made the first assertion nor denied the second. On the contrary, we wrote that the Jews shared "the Englishman's tongue but more of the Frenchman's perspective," and that the

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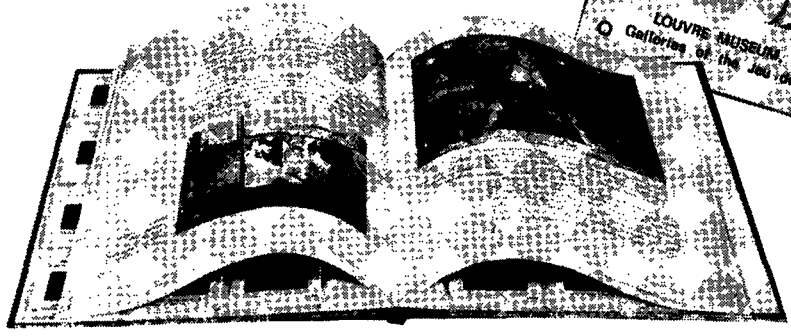

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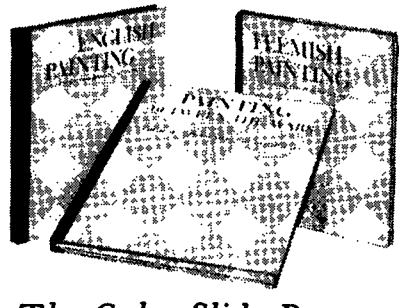

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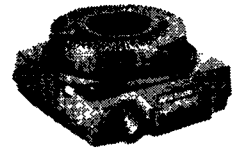

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Jewish poet recognized this "deeper bond with the French-Canadian 'provincial,' like himself a singer of some distant ballad." Jews responded to French-Canadian nationalism not as a threat but as a model of cultural solidarity. No less important, they could do so because of their constitutionally protected minority rights. The perceived exclusivism of the *Parti Québécois* and its insensitivity to those rights, however "progressive" the rhetoric in which the party couches its appeal, seems legitimate cause for concern.

Finally, in perhaps the most disturbing innuendo of all, Mr. Laferrière indicts us for "refus[ing] to attempt an explanation of the causes of Jewish bilingualism and, to a certain extent, some of the roots of French-Canadian anti-Semitism," alleging that "Jews became bilingual because they had to." If Mr. Laferrière is saying that Jews became bilingual because they were acting in accordance with, and pursuant to, the public law of the land, then they were doing what good citizens do in any society. If, however, he is implying that Jews became bilingual in order to exploit French Canadians, and that this exploitation is the cause of French-Canadian anti-Semitism, then he is himself repeating one of the tired clichés of anti-Semitism, as unworthy of his own cause as it is demeaning to the Jews.

Unfortunately, between Mr. Roy's assertion that the Jews aligned themselves with the "Wasps of Quebec," certain that the French Canadians would resign themselves to cultural genocide, and Mr. Laferrière's suggestion that the high degree of bilingualism among Jews is an expression of their instinct for exploitation, the prospects are not encouraging for the *"entente cordiale"*—and more—that we would all wish.

The crucial point of our article was unfortunately overlooked: the concern of Quebec's Jews is not with the *objectives* of Bill 101—making French the common language of Quebec society—but with the means chosen to achieve it; not with Francization—which Jews have begun to undertake—but with the coercive nature of Francization; not with French-Canadian nationalism *per se,* but with its "homogenizing" nature; not with the reformist orientation of the government, but with its sometimes insensitive zeal, and intolerence of opposing views. In effect, Quebec Jews intend to guide themselves by the motto of the rabbinic sage Hillel who said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am but for myself, what am I? If not now, when?" If Quebec Jews appear to be preoccupied with the first of these questions at the expense of the second, it is because they sense a separatist government taking the lead in that direction.

Human Rights

To the Editor of Commentary:

Peter L. Berger ["Are Human Rights Universal?," September 1977] attempts to draw a distinction between the various sorts of human rights that a nation should be expected to observe. The thrust of his argument seems to be that Western nations cannot and should not expect non-Western nations to observe all those rights which Western nations would include in the category of "human rights," the justification being that many human rights which Western nations recognize have evolved out of the cultural and historical background which is exclusive to those Western nations.

However, the statement that one nation's history or culture will dispose it to include, for instance, political rights in the category of human rights while another nation's history and culture will not create this disposition says nothing about the validity of the rights themselves. Mr. Berger has provided an *explanation* as to why some nations will accord citizens these rights while others will not, but he has left unanswered the important question he started out to answer: should these rights be extended to all human beings? He has given us a convenient means for categorizing proponents of various sorts of rights, but he has not touched upon the issue of the validity of the rights themselves. His "consensus test" can inform us, perhaps, of what Western and non-Western nations have in common concerning conceptions of human rights, but it cannot tell us whether *all* nations *ought* to include certain rights in the category of human rights.

Also, it seems to me that Mr. Berger has invoked the value of tolerance: we are to tolerate the non-observance of some human rights in a country which is not culturally or historically disposed to recognize them. But tolerance is a universal value—it admits of no exceptions, and once we have invoked it on behalf of one human conglomerate, we must invoke it on behalf of all others. We cannot assert tolerance on behalf of nations and refuse to assert it on behalf of all groups within these nations, be they ethnic or political groups. That a nation's history or culture does not render it congenial to the exercise of rights by both these sorts of groups indicates something about the nation, but it does not vitiate our duty to exercise and to advocate tolerance universally, something that we must do once we have invoked the value on behalf of one group.

Finally, if we were suddenly to encounter a country which, due to a lack of contact with the outside world, had no concept of human rights and behaved accordingly, it would be unfair to criticize such a nation on the ground that it did not recognize some or any human rights. But as Mr. Berger has pointed out, modern communication and transportation has made the existence of such a country virtually impossible. It would appear, then, that no nation we know of has any good reason for behaving as though it were ignorant of the concept of human rights and the various ways in which it is manifested.

As a sociologist, Mr. Berger is perhaps concerned to maintain certain autochthonous political and cultural practices in their pristine forms, so as to study them better. But when these practices are maintained at the expense of human lives and happiness, the cost of cultural purity is too dear. To ignore the plight of living persons who are caught in the mortmain of traditional practices for the sake of cultural diversity is a crime. I doubt seriously that Mr. Berger would wish to inflict upon himself, in the name of international diversity, the political repression which his philosophy would allow to be visited upon others.

C. H. Siegel

Austin, Texas

Peter L. Berger writes:

C.H. Siegel fundamentally misunderstands the implications of my argument. It is *not* a question of finding excuses for violations of human rights on the basis of some theory of cultural relativity. On the contrary, it is a question of

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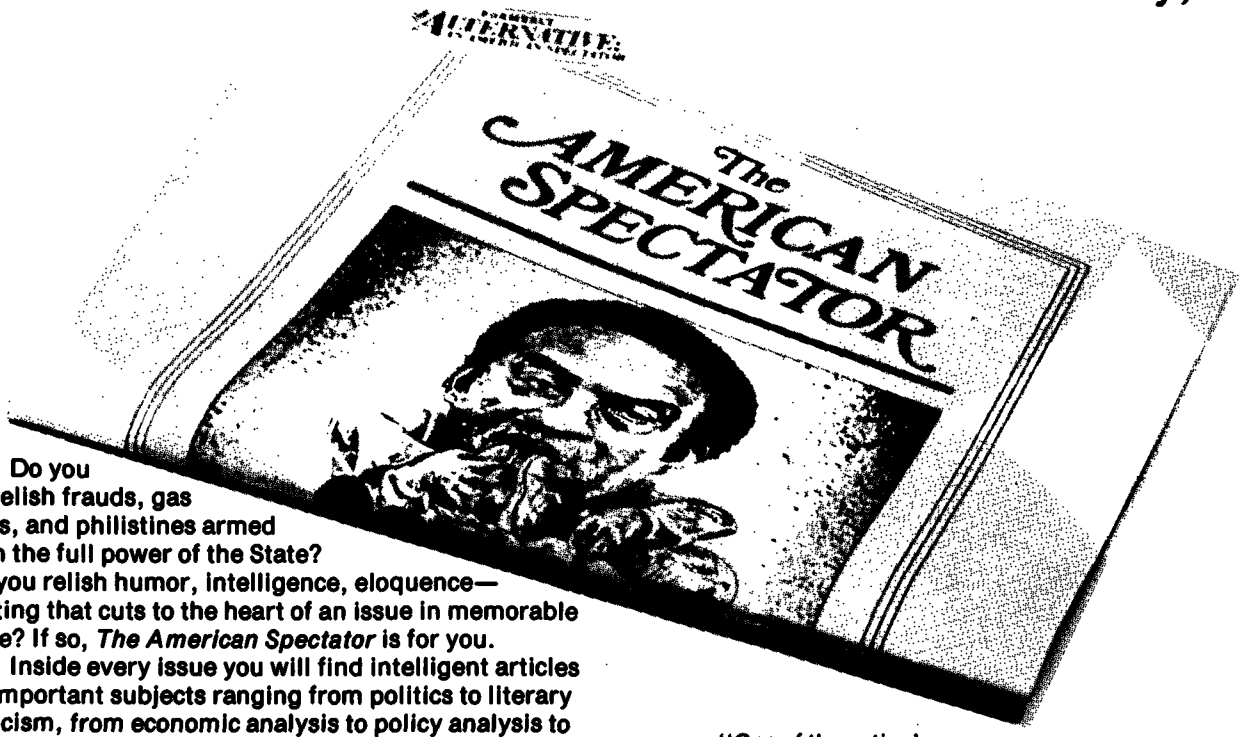
William F. Buckley, Jr.



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establishing a sound basis for the condemnation of such violations, wherever they may occur, *despite* the facts of cultural relativity. The distinction between those rights that derive from the Western tradition and those that rest on a broader consensus of mankind is made to serve the latter purpose, not the former. My argument may be too nuanced for some. Misunderstanding it is pardonable. Imputing to me a concern "to maintain certain autochthonous political and cultural practices in their pristine forms, so as to study them better" is not pardonable. Such imputation is false, insulting, and hardly conducive to the clarification of a difficult and morally urgent problem.

The New Thanatology

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was amused to find myself called a thanatologist by Leslie H. Farber in his article, "O Death, Where is Thy Sting-a-Ling-a-Ling?" [June 1977]. Although my version of existential psychology certainly considers death, this consideration is not central. Importance is placed on living well, and the contemplation of dying is only advocated insofar as it may improve life. Dr. Farber emphasizes the only paper I have written discussing dying, and excludes many other papers (some appearing in the same magazine as the one he cites) focusing upon living.

He also misconstrues my meaning. I do not believe that becoming familiar with death removes its sting. In this regard I would join with him in criticizing Ernest Becker, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, and most other thanatologists. I believe that in unmitigated recognition of the awfulness of death, one gains perspective on the importance of living intensely and purposefully. This process is only dampened by removing the sting from death. More than Dr. Farber realizes, therefore, I agree with his general point.

But he seems to have little by way of a position on the psychological importance of death and dying. My metaphorical concept of "small deaths," which he criticizes, is an attempt to explicate what is important about physical death, namely, that it constitutes the ultimate disconfirmation of the ego's attempts to plan and control life through the decision-making process. As such, physical death is mainly of psychological significance. It is quite appropriate, in this context, to consider smaller, less sweeping instances of failure to control events as "small deaths." In my view, full experience of the awfulness of these small deaths can have considerable developmental value by teaching a person humility in the face of imperfect control over one's life, and directionality in emphasizing the importance of those aspects of life most amenable to control. In contrast, Dr. Farber chooses the gadfly role in his article, and ends with little to offer the reader beyond legitimately questioning the value of attempting to treat death and dying as if they could somehow be without pain. . . .

Salvatore R. Maddi
Department of Behavioral Sciences
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Leslie H. Farber writes:

Since the subject of my essay was death, dying, and the new thanatology, not the lifework of Salvatore R. Maddi, there were things I had to omit. However, in view of the fact that Mr. Maddi's line on death, so to speak, is in the constructive, prescriptive mode that is standard to the new thanatology, I do not see why he should be dismayed to be "called a thanatologist"—even though I did not, in fact, call him one. I merely summarized and quoted from one article of his, whose point of view on death matters seemed well within the mainstream of current conventional wisdom on the subject, and a good example of certain aspects of it I wished to point to.

Mr. Maddi protests that he does not believe in removing death's sting. Indeed, he would rather capitalize on it. He finds its "awfulness" to be a lively source of purpose and inspiration. This up-beat, utilitarian position does not separate him from "other thanatologists" as clearly as he appears to think. More than Mr. Maddi realizes, our disagreement remains crucial.

Mr. Maddi has more appetite for restating his views than I have for repeating my objections. I would refer any interested reader to my original argument.

Just one item caught my attention, however, this time around: the matter of humility. We are dealing here with a policy of thought in which there is no misfortune or discomfort or tedium so tragic or so trivial that it cannot be cherished and dignified as a miniature "death," with all the happy clarity and enhancement such encounters are said to produce. This is a system that drains out the particularity of ordinariness while at the same time applying a pretentious gloss that reduces everything by inflation. How such systematic rhetorical violation of experience can offer instruction in humility is beyond me.

Giving & Big Giving

To the Editor of Commentary:

Marc Lee Raphael's review of my book, *Why They Give* [Books in Review, September 1977], is the stuff of which United Jewish Appeal brochures are made. . . .

Take the opening sentence of his review: "Philanthropy in Judaism is not so much an individual as a collective project. . . ." Does this mean that we are "one" in charity or that Jews approach communal tasks in a team spirit—Mr. Raphael's syntax is so muddled that either or both interpretations are possible. Next, picture Mr. Raphael's comments on advance-gift meetings he has attended: "I myself have been struck by an almost religious atmosphere of guilt-and-atonement that seems to characterize such meetings. . . ."

Between opening with oneness and closing with religion, Mr. Raphael gives us his version of fund raising, a stern business, sternly arrived at. . . .

The current fashion in Jewish agencies west of the Hudson is to denigrate New York's Jewish community—which traditionally provides a large part of the money raised nationally as well as a substantial percentage of big givers—and thus Mr. Raphael cites the undeniable virtues of Columbus, Ohio, where I presume he lives. Here, 16,000 Jews raised $2.7 million in 1975. This averages $169 per giver. Now compare that figure with the $8 each non-Jew (and Jew?) gave to the Columbus United Way during the same year. This really shows who the big givers are, doesn't it? Except for one flaw: the word "average." What the spread of gifts was in either campaign, Mr. Raphael doesn't say. . . .

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Mr. Raphael . . . asks: "Does the voluntary nature of philanthropy make it inevitable that an individual contributor or group of contributors, strongly identified with a cause or an agency, will have a pervasive influence over community decisions affecting that cause or agency?"

I'll admit, this query stopped me. You don't have to be a fund raiser or a professor of history to deduce that the views of people who have money usually get more consideration than the views of people who don't have money, especially if an agency needs money badly. . . . But the fact that such a . . . question is seriously asked in COMMENTARY suggests one of two things: a staggering naiveté or more probably a deliberate attempt to obfuscate my discussions of big givers in the post-World War II years on pages 181-182 and elsewhere in the book.

Indeed, big givers, their power, and the validity of their leadership, are the most important issues in Jewish communal life today. We are fortunate that some able men and women in and out of the establishment are deeply concerned. The terrible dilemma is that no one knows how to cope with these issues at a time when fewer and fewer people throughout the country are constantly asked for larger and larger contributions. To clarify the matter for Mr. Raphael, the only people who can be asked for large gifts are the small number who can afford to make them; that is why what may appear simple to him is so terribly complicated for everyone else.

This brings me to Mr. Raphael's curious belief that to say recognition is a tool in fund raising is an "insult." (To whom, I am not sure.) The discovery that people sometimes strive for publicity seems to surprise him, like the thought that people who contribute large sums may be pushy. Unfortunately, in the world of fund raising "as it actually operates," not everyone's motives are pure. . . .

With respect to *why* they give, Mr. Raphael evidently began reading the book at the last pages, where I did indeed sum up my thoughts about overall motivation. He may prefer to read final chapters of books first, a weakness to which I confess that I am also prone. Because he may possibly work backward as well, I commend to his attention pages which he obviously has not perused as yet. These include 163, 139, 135, 117, 108, and 88, which deal with the period 1921-45. Going back further, see page x of the introduction in which I say that I am "particularly interested in the people who really made it all possible, the big givers of the Jewish establishment." That's why I wrote the book. . . .

MILTON GOLDIN
Tarrytown, New York

MARC LEE RAPHAEL writes:

I was quite discouraged to see the letter from Milton Goldin. I am certainly aware that people do give, and give big, sometimes even for public recognition, but it is my perception (and that of Mr. Goldin, too) that this phenomenon is very limited. As to why they do give, Mr. Goldin's book, whether read forward or backward, provides no more than a total of two pages of answers.

Big giving, I agree, is motivated partly by the prospect of rewards, and these include social status, self-esteem, power, even honors and publicity. But in addition to such personal rewards, there is a deep sense of satisfaction which comes from being identified with a worthwhile cause larger than oneself, and a sense of pride which results from being identified with a group that has esteem and prestige in the Jewish community. Indeed, providing a suitably complex reward system looms as one of the most difficult tasks of all in federated Jewish philanthropy, for upon it depends the maintenance of the entire structure.

An even more basic disagreement with Mr. Goldin does remain, however, for I view big giving not as vulgarity and only partly as a quest for recognition. It seems to me to represent one of the most fundamental and profound religious responses of American Jews. It takes overwhelming events seriously, and affirms that both Jews and Jewish life are worth more than a small gift.

Soviet Analysts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was honored that Walter Laqueur would place me in the company of such great scholars as Sir Bernard Pares and Isaac Deutscher in his article, "Russia—Beyond Brezhnev" [August 1977]. However, it seems to me that Mr. Laqueur is really more in the optimistic-idealistic tradition than I am. The true optimists among analysts of the Sovet Union are those who think that the dissidents will soon be ruling the Soviet Union. The true descendants of the idealistic school are those who do not believe in the likelihood of dissident success, but who are willing nevertheless to sacrifice other foreign-policy goals in pursuit of the attainable, or those who, like many of the New Left in the 1960's, simply want to bear witness to their values, regardless of the political consequences.

American foreign policy should be based, I think, on an awareness of some of the societal supports that the leaders of the Soviet system have built for themselves over the decades and of the obstacles these supports create for a quick collapse of the Soviet system. My position is that in these circumstances, the best course of action is that associated with the realist school: treat politics as "the art of the possible" and try to support the types of changes in the Soviet Union that have greater feasibility.

JERRY F. HOUGH
Department of Political Science
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina

More on the Catacombs

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Michael Ledeen's article, "The Unknown Catacombs" [September 1977], must have been written some time ago, since he says that "the Appia catacombs are in bad shape." They were, but are no longer. The Pontifical Commission on Sacred Archaeology . . . started to clean the catacombs, which had indeed been a horrendous shambles, around 1973. . . . By now, as I verified a few months ago, the Vatican's work is almost finished. As I indicated in an illustrated pamphlet which I prepared recently for the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (the pamphlet is to be distributed in the United States to arouse interest in further restoration and study of this two-thousand-year-old Jewish legacy), the work has been done. Perhaps too well in fact, since very few of the ancient Jewish tombstones remain in the corridor walls, and even the few surviving two-thousand-year-old bones have been removed. The catacombs are, so to speak, quite clean. (Incidentally,

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Mr. Ledeen's assertion that "a few years ago representatives of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities managed to obtain funds for the restoration [of the Appia catacombs] and attempted to get in touch with the Vatican Commission on Sacred Archaeology for this purpose" is not true, according to Dr. Blayer, president of the Union.)

I can also bring Mr. Ledeen up to date on the disposition of the objects of Jewish culture (consisting mainly of 131 tombstones) which were formerly on display at the Jewish Hall of the Lateran Museum in Rome. These were brought to the "new" room in the Vatican Museum, which opened about three or four years ago. But though the huge exhibition hall is open to the public, the Jewish tombstones . . . are closed off by a wooden fence. I was originally told that this was done because the electricity was not working. But when I asked again two months ago, I was told by the director, Dr. Daltrop, that "the general public has no interest in these Jewish tombstones, and consequently we only open that section to scholars and students when they make a special request." . . .

I myself have been quite vitally interested in returning the catacombs to the Jews of Italy and in fact devoted a chapter of my book, *The Pope's Jews*, to the catacombs. Several years ago I discussed this subject with Monsignor (now Cardinal) Willebrantz . . . who was then director of the Vatican's Secretariat for Christian Unity, of which the Office for Christians and Jews is a subdivision. Monsignor Willebrantz was quite receptive to the idea in principle, but pointed out . . . that nothing could be done by the Vatican without first changing the Concordat of 1929 which gave the Church full control over the Jewish catacombs—a point of which I was, of course, very well aware. . . .

Now the revised Concordat is as good as voted in the Italian parliament; it provides that control over the Jewish catacombs will revert back to the Italian government, which will almost certainly place them under the jurisdiction of the Italian Jewish community. . . . Still, convincing the Vatican of the necessity for returning the Jewish tombstones and other Jewish objects in its possession will probably be as easy a task as moving the pyramids.

As to the Venosa catacombs, which Mr. Ledeen also discusses, I can attest to the fact that they are an absolute shambles, and, in my estimation, it would cost millions of dollars even to begin to restore them. The original entrance has been lost, and one has to enter by crawling through an opening in the rocks of about three feet high by ten feet wide. . . . As I myself found out on my recent visit—stumbling in the dark and carrying cameras, flash, and flashlight, which attracted the bats in droves—the stone often crumbles at the touch. Huge boulders have fallen down in all the corridors, blocking further passage.

Except for the many horizontal tomb-niches—sometimes up to thirteen in a row—there is very little left inside the Venosa catacombs which would justify the work and expense necessary to restore them, at least in the parts I was able to reconnoiter. Only two inscriptions in Latin, one with two small painted menorahs above the text, and the other with a large menorah carved into the rocks below . . . show clearly that these are not Christian catacombs (which are nearby) but Jewish ones dating back to the time when Venosa, around the 2nd or 3rd century C.E., was perhaps a totally Jewish city, its inhabitants dealing in grain for the Romans up north.

I was told by Father Cesare Colafemmina, . . . who has made quite an intensive study of the Christian and Jewish catacombs at Venosa, that somewhere way back in one of the almost inaccessible corridors is a beautiful colored fresco with Jewish emblems. But under present conditions, one would have to be a daring and agile acrobat to get close to the fresco.

A final word on the former Italian Minister of Cultural Affairs, Giovanni Spadolini, whom Mr. Ledeen mentions as being interested in the revision of the Concordat and the future of the Jewish catacombs. . . . Signor Spadolini has now accepted the post of president of the international committee being formed under the auspices of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities. This committee will be making a preliminary study of all the problems—historical, cultural, religious, and financial—involved in the restoration of the catacombs. . . .

SAM WAAGENAAR

Rome, Italy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Michael Ledeen's article with interest. When I established the museum of the Jewish community of Rome, I contacted the Vatican authorities to obtain one or more of the original Jewish tombstones they kept in the Lateran Palace (today the tombstones have been transferred to the Vatican Museum). But in spite of the good relationship I had with these authorities and the favorable disposition toward the Jews shown by the late Pope John XXIII, I did not succeed in securing a single piece I needed. Instead, we were supplied with reproductions of a few small tombstones and with a series of photographs of some catacombs (for which we paid). . . .

I agree with Mr. Ledeen that the Vatican has little, if any, interest in exposing such evidence of Jewish history to the light of day. But I am also afraid that neither the Union of Italian Jewish Communities nor the Jewish community of Rome has exerted enough pressure on the Vatican, on the Italian government, and on public opinion here and abroad to gain control of the catacombs and other historical artifacts of Jewish history which exist throughout Italy.

Two examples prove my point.

In 1964 . . . I visited Pitigliano, an ancient city in southern Tuscany, and I saw the miserable condition of the half-demolished Jewish synagogue there, not to mention the adjoining yeshivah. I offered, as president of the Jewish community of Rome, to have the building restored if it was not possible for the communty of Leghorn, which had jurisdiction over Pitigliano, . . . to do so.

Thirteen years have elapsed since my visit and almost twelve since I relinquished the presidency of the Rome community. I learned today that the old building is inaccessible and almost totally destroyed. . . . Pitigliano is only one case among dozens of ancient communities, libraries, and cemeteries abandoned and all but destroyed throughout Italy.

The Jewish Museum of Rome, which attracted so many visitors from all over the world, has been closed to the public for almost two years now. The alterations have not been strictly supervised by the rabbinate of Rome or by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, and, in fact, it appears that new and unorthodox criteria are being

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employed in the process of renovation. Nor has any assurance been given that the changes have any historical validity.

No doubt, anti-Semitism and the antagonism existing in Italy today among some Catholic and left-wing politicians distract the attention of local Jewish leaders from the problems of culture, archaeology, and the preservation of our past. But our survival is linked to the daily struggle to preserve our ancient stones, as well as our dignity and our souls, in Italy, in Israel, in the world.

The de-Vaticanization of the Jewish catacombs, which is one provision of the revised Concordat, can be the beginning of the restoration of Jewish cultural riches in Italy. But the effort to preserve our history must come from Italian Jewish organizations, with the help of institutions and individuals who have experience in such cultural undertakings.

FAUSTO PITIGLIANI

Rome, Italy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The Unknown Catacombs" by Michael Ledeen has awakened long-dormant memories. It was during the summer vacation of 1928 that I spent an afternoon in the Jewish catacombs in Via Appia Antica. The catacombs were listed in a very old Baedecker I then carried, and were situated below the garden of an *osteria*. . . . A small, handwritten notice at the entrance to the *osteria* invited the visitor to view the Jewish catacombs, and a carafe of wine was all that was needed to induce the innkeeper to get a candle and a rickety ladder, and open a trap-door in the corner of the garden. After that the visitor was on his own.

It was a moving experience for a seventeen-year-old youth, his head crammed with classical knowledge, suddenly to find himself amid the bones of his ancestors of two millennia ago.

I quickly established that the inscriptions were indeed in Greek, but if memory does not fail me—and half a century is a long time to remember—what had first puzzled me when trying to read those inscriptions was that they were written in Hebrew letters.

I served in Rome during World War II and after the war was stationed in Italy for eight years; and I have frequently visited Rome since. But I have never succeeded in verifying that old impression. The catacombs, I was repeatedly informed, were closed as "unsafe." . . .

F. S. MANOR

Winnipeg *Free Press*
Winnipeg, Canada

MICHAEL LEDEEN writes:

I am delighted that my brief article on the Jewish catacombs of Italy has generated so much interest [see also Letters from Readers, November 1977]. Sam Waagenaar is undoubtedly right when he says that the Appia catacombs have been "cleaned," although perhaps "picked bare" would be a better descriptive phrase. Everything he says, together with the testimony of Fausto Pitigliani, demonstrates that we are still a long way from being able to examine the patrimony of Italian Jewry.

It is, therefore, somewhat disappointing to find a scholar of the caliber of Mr. Waagenaar associating himself with the Union of Italian Jewish Communities in yet another apologia for the Vatican. The pamphlet he refers to says that the catacombs in Via Torlonia—recently transferred to the Rome city government—were closed in order to protect their contents from possible vandalism. The pamphlet then cites Vatican sources to the effect that the catacombs will be reopened in a few years once a new entrance-tunnel is built. Alas, this is simply another in a long list of excuses for an institution which is really trying to keep a firm grip on Jewish historical documents. When a highly qualified Jewish group asked for permission to photograph the Torlonia catacombs, it was denied. Here there was no risk of vandalism, but the Pontifical Commission did not want to take the chance of a record being made of the contents of the catacombs.

The point, of course, is made by Mr. Pitigliani: Italian Jews are going to have to steel themselves and face the facts. Continuation of the centuries-old policy of collaboration is not going to dislodge the Jewish treasures from the Vatican Museum or from the hundreds of other Catholic institutions throughout the peninsula. And as Mr. Waagenaar rightly says, Jews cannot expect the simple revision of the Concordat to suffice, even though it is a necessary step. They must fight for their cultural heritage; Dr. Blayer's denial of what is on the public record shows that they are not yet ready to do so.

Finally, F.S. Manor's youthful memory serves him well.

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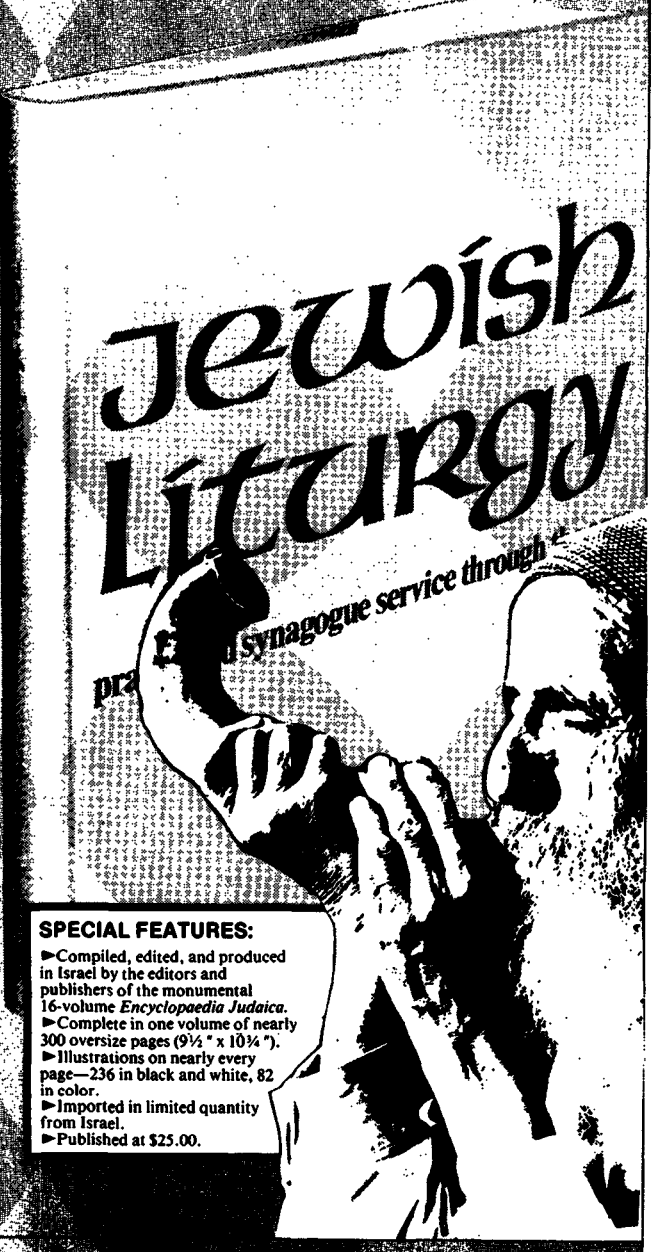

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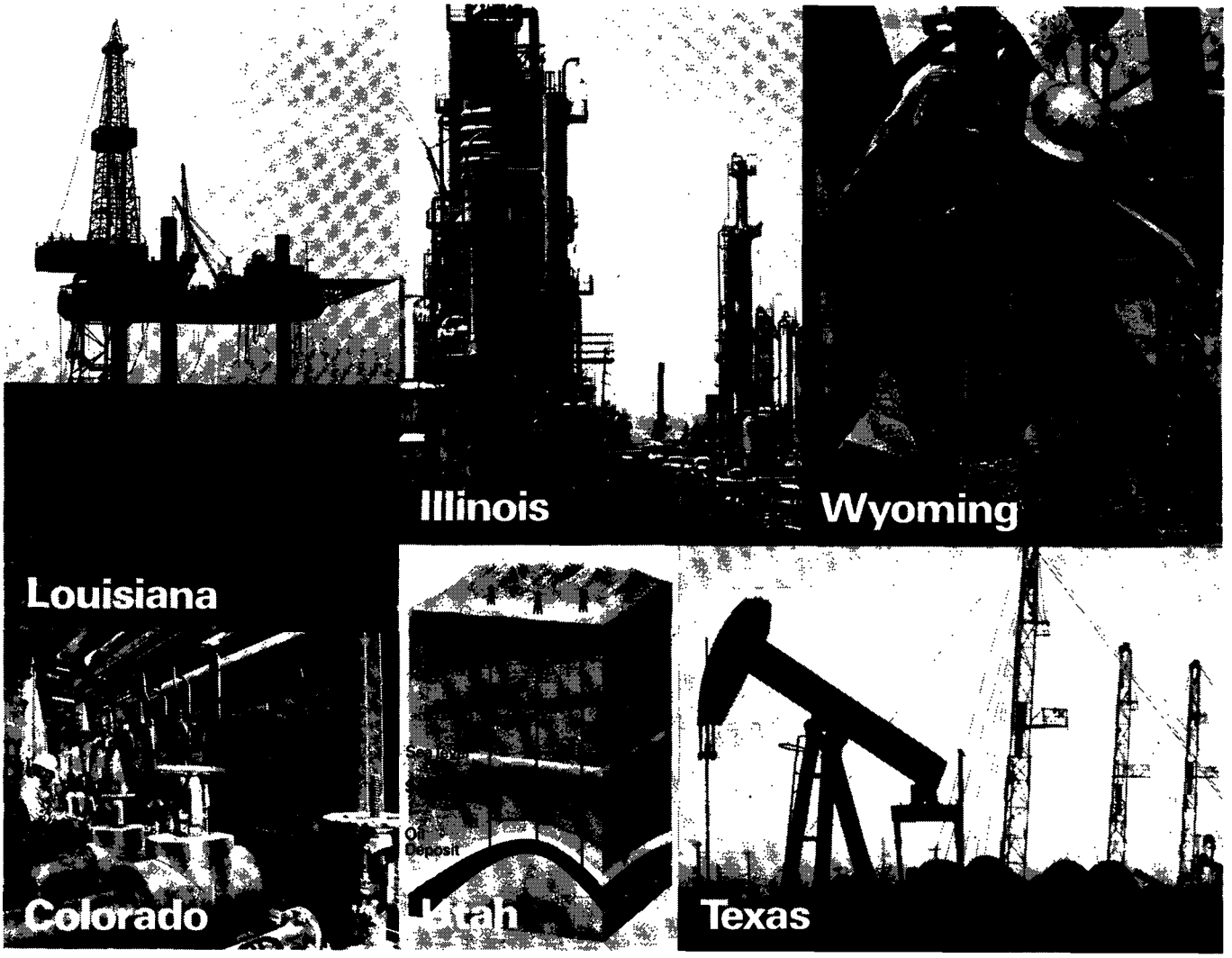

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Why Arms Control Has Failed

Edward N. Luttwak

OVER the last decade, the strategic competition between the United States and the Soviet Union has been transformed. From a clear American superiority, by all criteria of measurement, the balance has tilted to an increasingly precarious parity. A net American inferiority, in *all* dimensions of capability, is projected by 1985. At the same time, the strategic-nuclear arsenals of both the Soviet Union and the United States have increased very greatly in power, and expenditures on strategic forces and their ancillaries have grown considerably. All these changes have taken place under the aegis of an American strategic policy dominated by arms-control objectives. Clearly something must be very wrong with our pursuit of arms control, especially in the Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT) negotiations. But what?

I

WHATEVER is wrong with arms control, it is not the essential theory, whose logic is perfectly sound.

Imagine a world of two identical countries, X and Y, whose array of forces is also identical. Let X make preparations to build a new weapon, say, a bomber. Faced with an emerging bomber force in X, the leaders of Y can choose between two instruments of strategic statecraft, force-building or arms conrol.

One force-building response is defensive; in this case, it would mean deploying fighters and anti-aircraft weapons capable of intercepting the new bombers. The other response is competitive; country Y could build a bomber force of its own (or some other offensive force) to offset whatever political or military gains X hoped to achieve with its new bomber force.

As Y reacts to X and vice-versa, an additional and purely mechanical source of tension will arise between the two countries, even if each has good information about the actions of the other (so that surprises and overreactions can both be avoided). If, for example, Y's progress in building air defenses lags behind X's bomber effort, Y will be faced with an interval of vulnerability. At worst, it may be tempted to launch a preventive attack to destroy X's nascent bomber force before it becomes ready to operate. Even less drastic alternatives, such as the accelerated deployment of bombers or other offensive weapons, to offset by competition what cannot be negated by defense, will open new channels of force-building, which will unfailingly generate their own instabilities. If the information that each side has about the other is *not* good, with odd glimpses of truth or falsehood dimly perceived through walls of secrecy, action and reaction could be altogether more dangerous. But this case is irrelevant here, since without good information, arms control is not feasible either.

Even if no preventive wars break out, the best result that the force-building response can yield, is that the two countries will acquire a matched set of bombers and anti-bomber defenses. While they are reaching this new equilibrium, scarce resources will have been expended, new weapons will have come into existence to add to the violence of an eventual war, and the military and military-industrial interests in each country will have been strengthened, thus making it that much more likely that there will be yet more military competition between X and Y. And when the new offensive and defensive weapons are fully deployed, neither country will have gained any lasting advantage in physical security or political power. Moreover, any *temporary* advantage gained by either along the way will have entailed a corresponding risk of conflict, generated precisely by the imbalance which yielded that advantage in the first place.

The force-building approach guarantees these grim results, while also increasing the risk of war. Arms control, by contrast, offers the possibility of a zero-cost and low-risk solution to the same predicament.

Provided with early information of X's bomber-building intentions, let Y open negotiations. Assuming that the leaders of X are rational, and assuming further that they do believe that Y will

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react to their bomber effort with equivalent force-building of their own, the leaders of both X and Y should be able to agree in principle that the best course for both would be to foreclose the new channel of competition. At this point, matters can proceed to detailed technical negotiations, in order to agree on precise descriptions of the bombers to be prohibited, and to define the means of inspection which will be used by both sides to verify compliance. If the difficulties of drafting can be overcome, and mutually acceptable verification arrangements can be made, both sides will have avoided the costs of building new forces, as well as the risks they generate. The two countries will also have averted a further increase in the overall destructive potential of the military forces that any war might unleash, and, moreover, they will have prevented an increase in the role of the military and industrial interests of each society.

The same happy result may be achieved without any actual negotiations, through unilateral or tacit arms control. For example, country X may be initiating its bomber program in reaction to some tentative weapons-building plans being discussed in Y. If so, Y may pursue unilateral arms control by formally renouncing any intention of acquiring the weapons being considered, so long as X exercises similar restraint. Or else, to avoid provoking X with an offer of mutual restraint that could easily be misinterpreted as a polite ultimatum, Y may practice tacit as well as unilateral arms control by demonstratively abandoning plans to build the weapons which were triggering X's bomber effort, while leaving the conditions of its restraint implicit.

To some ears, unilateral arms control has defeatist connotations, but whether arms control is negotiated or unilateral, declared or tacit, is in fact of little consequence; the different methods can yield exactly the same beneficial results.

II

In this elementary and abstract formulation, the merits of arms control as a tool of national strategy are compelling. As compared to force-building, it offers a fully equivalent degree of security, and indeed a higher degree of security in many cases, at a much lower risk of instability and war, at no cost, without any increase in the ultimate destructive potential of war arsenals, and also without the deformations of society caused by the artificial growth of military-industrial interests. Whatever is wrong with arms control, then, it is clearly not its logic.

To be sure, this model of the basic theory is highly artificial, assuming, as it does, only two identical countries, with identical weapons-building capabilities and also good information. When these artificial assumptions are waived, practical obstacles arise.

For example, once the real world of many powers is accepted into the model, the scope of arms control may diminish. Country X may be deploying its bombers against country Z rather than against country Y; as far as Y is concerned, the threat to its security is real nonetheless, but in this case it cannot hope to dispose of the problem by negotiating a bilateral arms-limitation agreement with X, and still less can it hope to dissuade X by unilateral restraint and tacit bargaining. There does remain the possibility of multilateral arms control, with Z being brought in along with X and Y, but that would complicate matters severely, and might fail (even with ample good will all around) simply because of the sequence and phasing of the various force-building efforts. If, for instance, X is building its bombers in response to some effort by Z, undertaken by Z in the first place to react against the weapons being deployed by yet another country, by the time Y moves to negotiate limitations, X may be confronting weapons already being produced in country Z, and it in turn may be facing a force already deployed in country A.

And then, of course, countries are not identical, and neither are their weapons. In our model, the decisive argument that Y advances to persuade X to agree to bomber limitations is that Y can and will nullify whatever military or political gains X may be hoping to obtain from its new bombers. But if X is richer and more advanced than Y, its leaders may remain unpersuaded, and may calculate instead that Y will not be able to afford the resources needed to nullify their bomber effort. Alternatively, the leaders of X may concede that Y does have the resources needed to make their bomber program unprofitable, but they may also believe that Y's rulers lack the political will to react, or that Y's populace may refuse to make the necessary sacrifices. In either case, arms control may be impossible.

Variety in weapons characteristics is as great a problem as variety in the countries that build them. If X is planning to build weapons of a given type, and Y of another, the two countries may disagree about their respective capabilities, thus failing to agree on criteria for reciprocal limitations. It is enormously difficult to find any objective standard to measure the capabilities of dissimilar weapons: strategic bombers may have more payload than strategic missiles, but the performance of the latter may be more reliable, especially if anti-bomber defenses are deployed while anti-missile defenses are not. Even within the same category of weapons, comparisons are very difficult. (Until quite recently there was disagreement on the capabilities of the new Soviet Backfire bomber even within different agencies of the same U.S. government.) In practice, each side may privately believe that its own weapons are superior, while arguing the opposite in arms-control negotiations.

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("If you are allowed to build fifty of your large-payload bombers, then our side must be allowed to build a hundred of our little missiles.")

Even if there is no deliberate manipulation—which the internal politics of arms control does tend to encourage—there is much scope for honest disagreement. Prudent defense planners must be conservative in assessing the performance of their own forces (thus evaluating downward) while being equally conservative in estimating the enemy's strength (thus evaluating upward). In their calculations, prudent country Y planners must accordingly assume that all the bombers of country X are fully operational when needed, and that very few would be intercepted by Y's defenses, while at the same time making all due allowance for technical failures, enemy intercepts, and maintenance rotation when estimating the capabilities of their own weapons. And of course country X planners must make the opposite assumptions. With prudent evaluation on both sides, there is therefore a systematic difference in the weight that each side gives to the forces of the other.

Geographic and demographic differences compound the difficulty of evaluating weapons and forces. If the forward bases of country Y are quite close to the main cities of X, then the two sides may disagree on what is a "strategic" weapon at all. From the X-country point of view, Y's light bombers might as well be heavy since they only have a short way to travel. But it may be very difficult to secure an agreement in which Y's light bombers are counted on the same footing as Y's heavies: any departure from clear-cut parities is likely to meet much resistance. Differences of demographic structure are of particular importance in today's world of nuclear forces aimed at entire national populations. If country X is largely urban, with some high proportion of its population in a few large city areas, while Y's population is significantly more dispersed, then the destructive potential of identical nuclear forces will be correspondingly different. Country X is not likely to agree to a treaty that limits each side to, say, fifty identical missiles, if Y's fifty missiles can kill 70 per cent of X's population while X's identical force can only kill, say, 7 per cent of Y's population. Of course, a formula that equalizes vulnerability rather than the forces themselves could be written into a treaty. But again, as matters are made more complicated, agreement becomes correspondingly less likely.

And then there is the still greater problem of information. Nowadays, the superpowers have reliable observation satellites, and indeed much of the whole arms-control phenomenon has been brought into existence by their development. It is well known that TV and film cameras carried into space by orbiting satellites can produce very precise images of the ground below for immediate transmission, or in a more accurate and secure form, the data can also be recovered on film. (Capsules released from orbiting satellites in space are caught at low altitudes in a rather spectacular manner by transport aircraft equipped with nets.) But if satellite observation is available for arms-control inspection, it is equally available to find targets for a disarming "counterforce" attack. This provides an automatic incentive to build exactly those types of strategic weapons (mobile and/or concealed) which *cannot* be reliably located by satellite observation, and the qualities which protect against attack must also prevent inspection for arms control.

In retrospect, it seems clear that the advent of satellite observation in the 1960's did not truly abolish strategic secrecy, thus assuring the information needed for arms control forever after; satellites merely opened a temporary window in the wall of secrecy because of the sheer coincidence that the weapons of the 1960's happened to be large and easily identifiable. Satellite observation came along precisely when the weapons that the cameras could identify and count were being deployed. Nowadays, by contrast, we have new types of weapons, including both cruise and ballistic missiles, which are mobile or small, or both, and thus easily concealed from satellite observation. While it is virtually impossible to hide fixed-site ballistic missiles properly housed in their concrete "silos," or the yards in which submarines are built, thousands of cruise missiles could be kept fully concealed quite easily. It is true that the scrutiny of the satellites, and all the incidental knowledge of industry which they provide, would undoubtedly allow us to determine whether or not some large number of mobile missiles had been built, but satellite cameras could not be used to count these weapons with any precision, any more than they could help us to fix their position for a disarming counterforce attack.

This brings to the surface the peculiar paradox of arms control over the cruise missile. The qualities of the cruise missile which subvert the procedures of negotiated limitations are precisely the qualities which also achieve the substantive purposes of arms control. Because cruise missiles are small, inherently mobile, and therefore easily concealed, it is a hopeless task to devise any treaty to limit them that would rest on any serious assurance of verification. But their small size is also the reason that cruise missiles are relatively cheap. Further, since these small and easily concealed weapons are not vulnerable to disarming counterforce attacks, rival cruise-missile forces should be quite stable: neither side could hope to disarm the other in a surprise attack, so that both sides can be secure. Thus not only the costs, but also the risks generated by these weapons, are inherently smaller than those of the fixed-site ballistic missiles now deployed. It follows that as far as cruise missiles

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are concerned, the best form of arms control may be no control at all.

But the nexus between arms control and the information needed to draft treaties and to verify compliance entails a deeper and ultimately more sinister paradox. If all obstacles are overcome and arms-control treaties are duly negotiated to constrain all that *can* be constrained with adequate verification, the ironical result might be to displace the strategic competition from the large weapons of classic form that are easily identified and counted, to weapons that have neither attribute. In a world of many powers, each with its own distinct internal politics of resource-allocation, and each with its own circle of friends and enemies, it is entirely unlikely that arms-control efforts, however successful, can achieve more than to prohibit the deployment of specific weapons and forces. The hope, sometimes expressed, that arms control may in itself bring the strategic competition to an end is supported neither by the pure logic of arms control nor by the experience of its practice.

Successful arms-control efforts will therefore channel the competition for military power into the development of those weapons which are not subject to limitations because they cannot be identified and counted. In this way, the very success of arms control may eventually create a situation of the most dangerous instability, in which all sides are working on small and easily concealed weapons which can suddenly appear fully operational to confront unready opponents. With each side knowing that it may be faced by strategic surprise at any time, maximum incentives for competition, and for preventive war, will have been created.

It is true that even at present the imponderable results of research efforts conducted in the secrecy of military laboratories entail a permanent danger of instability. But the large-scale force-building efforts now conducted openly (because arms control is not effective) provide a double guarantee against destabilizing surprise. First, the sheer scale of the visible efforts implies a corresponding limitation on the resources flowing into secret force-building activities; second, the large and diversified forces now deployed provide a high degree of insurance that the sudden emergence of any revolutionary new weapon will not undermine stability. This indeed is the logic of current American deployment. The land-based missiles, the submarine systems, and the long-range bombers could all be neutralized quite suddenly by the emergence of revolutionary devices. But simultaneous breakthroughs in all the very different scientific areas involved are most unlikely.

Neither guarantee can survive in the wake of prolonged and successful arms-control efforts, through which the forces in place will have been greatly reduced in size and diversification, and through which *overt* force-building efforts will have been greatly diminished or even eliminated, thus releasing abundant resources for less visible activities. True, secrecy is much more easily maintained in laboratory research than in engineering development, when weapons are taken out to be tested, but this does not dispose of the problem. Even if the tests of some revolutionary new weapon that threatens to undermine stability were duly observed and properly understood, it might take years for development to catch up, and in the meantime the prospect of unilateral vulnerability will be an incentive to preventive war. This, then, is the ultimate irony: the inherent limits that information sets on the scope of arms control may mean that the final reward of sustained success in arms control will be the utter defeat of its goals.

STILL, even when all these practical problems and all these dangers of varying likelihood are taken into account, arms control remains in principle a much more desirable alternative than force-building.

Bilateral arms control is undoubtedly easier to achieve than arms control in the real world of many powers, but then multilateral agreements are scarcely an impossibility, either. Negotiations will be more complicated when many parties are involved, but on the other hand, the existence of alliances may offer solutions denied in the pure bilateral case of country X and country Y. For example, alliances can help to overcome the difficulties that emerge when the artificial assumption of identical countries is waived. Country Y may be too poor, or too irresolute, effectively to discourage X from opening a new channel of competition by building its bombers, but an alliance of Y and Z may together dissuade X by convincingly threatening to nullify the gains of its bomber program through a joint force-building effort of their own.

As for differences in weapons characteristics, and the built-in asymmetry caused by conservative evaluations on each side, these certainly create many difficulties, but they are after all of a purely technical character, and patient negotiations by technical experts should in principle be able to overcome such problems.

Much the same goes for geographic and demographic differences between the parties. Given good will, or rather a rational appreciation of the mutual advantages of restraint, there is no reason why formulas could not be found to equalize the asymmetries. If Y's light bombers can reach the main cities of X as easily as X's heavy bombers can travel the much greater distance to Y's cities deep inland, then the two physically different forces can be evaluated by their actual effectiveness against their respective targets, and then limited accordingly in a treaty. Similarly, if X is inherently more vulnerable to nuclear bombardment because of its higher population densities, Y's weapons can be more severely restricted so as to yield equality in

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destructive power under an arms-limitation treaty.

Even the paradox of visibility and vulnerability, as well as the long-term effects of arms control over the more visible weapons which release resources for more unstable invisible weapons, does not make arms control futile. If cruise missiles inherently achieve the substantive aims of arms control, let the negotiations focus on the many other costly and destabilizing weapons now being built. As for the long-term problem, it may well be argued that in the presence of today's luxuriant force-building, the immediate gains of economy and safety that arms control can yield are of much greater consequence than the remote dangers which successful arms control may eventually cause in the very long term. Certainly these hypothetical dangers need not deter the modest efforts now under way.

III

WHATEVER is wrong with arms control, therefore, it is not the various practical difficulties, each of which can be overcome, at least in part.

If our arms-control model is brought still nearer to reality by substituting the Soviet Union and the United States for X and Y, a new set of difficulties immediately arises. The Soviet Union undoubtedly lacks the attributes of an ideal partner for arms control; indeed, some might say that it is grotesquely miscast for the part.

The first obstacle is the Soviet negotiating style. If a unilateral concession is made to Soviet negotiators for the sake of "generating a positive atmosphere," the Soviet side will take what is given but will under no circumstances volunteer a reciprocal concession. It is not that Soviet diplomats are necessarily tougher than Western negotiators or even that their conduct is a symptom of inflexibility. It is merely a question of method. Soviet negotiators insist on treating each issue quite separately, making the best bargain they can in each case. They do not try to smooth the path to agreement by yielding on lesser points for the sake of the common interest in the outcome of the negotiations as a whole.

There is training and tradition behind this method; there may also be fear, personal fear. Soviet diplomats must clearly remember what happened to their colleagues during the earlier stages of the purge period under Stalin, when very many were killed or deported on the charge that they had betrayed the Soviet side in international negotations by making unnecessary concessions. (In the later stages of the great purge, this was no longer the case: mere contact with foreigners was then often sufficient evidence of treason.) But whatever the reason, Soviet negotiators invariably seek to make each bargain as specific as possible, and far from trying to create a good "negotiating climate," will sometimes deliberately stage episodes of uncivil conduct as a bargaining tactic, to intimidate the other side or just to distract attention.

None of this need matter very much in negotiations where single issues must be decided by straightforward bargaining. One can certainly agree on the price of a shipment of apples with Soviet traders as well as one can with their British or French counterparts. But in trying to negotiate significant arms-control measures, one must almost invariably trade *across* the issues, since the variety of weapons characteristics and all the other asymmetries make issue-by-issue bargaining very difficult.

In Western diplomatic practice, negotiators often make "good-will" exchanges to one another to help overcome technical complexities and other intractable obstacles to agreement. If Britons and Americans are negotiating on the price of apples today and will move on to determine the price of pears tomorrow, and there is sharp disagreement on both, one side may well yield on the price of the apples in the expectation that the other side will feel duty-bound to show flexibility when negotiations move on to pears. In dealing with Soviet negotiators, by contrast, the full difficulty of resolving the apple issue will have to be confronted, and when the discussions move on to the pears, the process must begin all over again, with neither side having good-will points in hand to make an agreement any easier. Given the inherent complexities of arms-control negotiations, and the great scope for sharp disagreements on hard technical questions, it is evident that issue-by-issue bargaining may sometimes make agreement quite impossible.

A second and more serious obstacle to arms control with the Soviet Union is the very nature of its politics. The logic of arms control depends on the recognition of a common interest in avoiding force-building which can bring no *national* advantage. In our initial example, country X refrains from building its planned bomber force because it calculates that after Y has duly reacted, it will have gained no net benefit, "it" being the country as a whole, rather than its soldiers and weapons builders. But if country X is the Soviet Union, then the logic may not apply at all.

In American politics, arms contractors have some political leverage, especially on Capitol Hill, since they employ quite a few constituents. (In fact, the arms industry seems to have more influence than the soft-drink bottlers, though of course much less than the dairy farmers.) But in the Soviet Union the "metal eaters," as the party leaders who run the military industries are known, are not just one interest group among many, as in the United States, but rather core members of the major coalition of Soviet politics. The key to the ability of the "metal eaters" to claim such a large proportion of Soviet economic resources seems to be their alliance with the secret police at one end—whose

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calls for "vigilance" and whose repressions are justified by the fancied menace of NATO and of the Chinese—and, at the other, with the armed forces, which of course have a direct consumer interest in military production.

The politics of the Kremlin are poorly understood, but virtually all our experts agree that the coalition of the KGB, soldiers, and military-production managers is a major force in shaping policy. It follows that within the Soviet Union there is powerful and systematic pressure for more force-building—in fact, there is every reason to believe that the coalition only allowed Brezhnev to embark upon the policy of détente on condition that the military build-up would continue as before, if not actually accelerate. This state of affairs naturally restricts the scope of arms control, since the common interest on which it must be based cannot be the Soviet "society-wide" interest in economy and safety. Instead, there is only the much narrower overlap between the general U.S. interest on the one hand, and the highly specialized interests of the Soviet military-production coalition on the other. American SALT negotiators were given some idea of the peculiar autonomy of the "metal eaters," even at a fairly high level in the Soviet government, when a senior Russian delegate privately asked his American counterpart to persuade his colleagues to stop discussing the details of Soviet forces in front of the *Soviet* foreign-ministry types in the delegation.

ANOTHER serious obstacle to arms control is the traditional Russian passion for secrecy. Even after many years of supposedly intimate negotiations on strategic forces, the Russians refuse to disclose any meaningful information about the characteristics of their weapons and the structure of their forces, let alone about their force-building plans; there is not even any substitute discussion of Soviet strategy and doctrine. It has been reported that in SALT both delegations use only American data, for Soviet as well as for American forces; apparently the Soviet delegates have not even disclosed the proper designations of their weapons (that is why the terminology of the 1972 SALT-1 accords is so vague, with references to "ballistic-missile launchers of older types" and so on, in lieu of any precise designation). Of course, satellite observation can provide a reliable count of strategic weapons, so long as they are fairly large, of classic form, and actually deployed. However, not even the magic of high-resolution cameras, scanning computers, and electronic intelligence can reveal weapons until after they have been tested, and sometimes not until they are actually deployed. Unfortunately, the success of arms control often depends on information at the earliest possible stage of the force-building cycle and certainly before production is under way. If country Y finds out about X's bombers only when the prototypes begin to appear on the testing airstrip, it will usually be too late to negotiate limitations. Within country X, the bomber effort will have acquired momentum, if only because much of the total cost will have been paid already, and Y on the other hand cannot have much confidence in a limitation treaty if X already has developed prototypes, ready for large-scale production at any time. The Soviet refusal to publish future deployment plans—as the United States does—or indeed anything at all specific about its military forces, past, present, or future, therefore restricts the scope of arms control rather seriously.

The Russian passion for secrecy also diminishes the scope of arms control by making verification extremely difficult. Satellite observation is once again crucial, but for all the remarkable detail of the photography, and the valuable performance data that can be obtained from electronic intelligence, the information may nevertheless be too ambiguous to give sufficient confidence for proper verification: data which are technically very good may be worthless because Soviet secrecy denies the wider circumstantial knowledge that can give them meaning. When Soviet satellite cameras photograph a missile-like object on some American testing site, Soviet analysts can usually identify the missile quite easily and they can then consult an abundance of published information on the exact specifications of the missile, its particular mission, the number to be built, and so on. By contrast, American analysts provided with a similar photograph can do no better than guess the mission of the weapon and make very tentative estimates of its range and payload. Usually the numbers to be built cannot be estimated at all: the counting can begin only when the weapons are actually being deployed. Even then, doubts may remain; for all we know, there could be hundreds of uncounted strategic missiles kept in concealed places other than the characteristic operational launchers easily recognized in satellite photographs. In practice, this means that in dealing with the Soviet Union, standards of verification must be relaxed, or else many arms-control hopes must be abandoned. In either case, the scope for genuine—that is, properly verified—arms control is considerably restricted. Arms control without high-confidence verification is a contradiction in terms. It does not lessen the risks of conflict but increases them, and it does not diminish incentives to force-building but makes them stronger. Low-confidence verification is not a substitute for proper inspection procedures, and it is not even a good device to mask unilateral disarmament.

Another peculiarity of Soviet statecraft which affects arms control, or rather the observance of its agreed limitations, is the Soviet penchant for the use of probing tactics. Like the hotel thief who will not break a lock but who will walk down the corridors trying each door in the hope of find-

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ing one carelessly left open, Soviet policy constantly probes such arms limitations as there are, to exploit any gaps in American vigilance, as well as any loopholes in the agreed texts. For example, under the terms of Article IV of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, no nuclear weapons may be placed in orbit around the earth. The Russians are not known to have sent up weapon satellites equipped with nuclear warheads, but they have continued to test the so-called FOBS version of the SS-9 heavy missiles since signing the treaty; with FOBS delivery, these large nuclear-capable missiles do not quite complete a full orbit around the earth, but rather descend to earth just before doing so. In this way, the Russians have tested a weapon (which may or may not have carried a nuclear warhead) without precisely violating the terms of the agreement, which defines space vehicles as those completing at least one *full* orbit around the earth.

An altogether more serious probing operation also failed to evoke firm American reaction. The 1972 ABM treaty, actually the only really significant arms-control measure in force at present, prohibits not only the deployment but also the development and testing of mobile systems designed to intercept ballistic missiles (Article V). In a "common understanding" appended to the treaty on April 13, 1972, the Soviet Union further agreed that the development and testing of *any* non-fixed ABM component was forbidden by the treaty. However, for the last five years there have been persistent reports from authoritative intelligence sources that the Soviet Union has violated the treaty by testing components of mobile ABM systems at the Kapustin Yar and Shary Sagan ranges. It seems that there have been intermittent American complaints about these tests but no really determined action. It appears to be Soviet diplomatic doctrine that if the injured party does not resist such probing, it is actually giving its tacit consent, so that the violations are thereby virtually legitimized.

There are no doubt many observers who would dismiss each of these separate points as trivial, arguing quite simply that the Russians cannot be trusted to keep the agreements they sign, least of all important arms-control agreements. It is certainly true that the constant duplicity of Soviet public discourse scarcely inspires confidence. The Soviet press, radio, and television and all the overseas outlets of Soviet propaganda, do not merely slant the news and distort history, as many others do, but also disseminate a great quantity of outright falsehood, obviously quite deliberately. In the Soviet media, one may read stories full of circumstantial details about secret American cooperation in South African nuclear-weapons efforts, about the Nazi experts who instruct the Israeli General Staff, about CIA payoffs to Soviet dissidents, about West German plots against Czechoslovakia's independence [*sic*], and so on. At a more prosaic level, there is constant lying in newspaper articles which compare the Soviet and the Western standards of living, and these are lies known to be such by those who write them, by the typesetters, the proofreaders, the censors, and all but the most ignorant readers. All governments engage in lying, but in the Soviet Union deliberate and massive public falsehood is very much a normal circumstance, by now no doubt widely accepted as such. This naturally inspires doubts about the sincerity of any Soviet statements, and about the reliability of any Soviet undertakings, including those written into the texts of treaties.

NEVERTHELESS, although the Soviet Union has violated many treaty commitments, this has mostly occurred in its dealings with the weak. There have been few outright violations of agreements signed with the United States, and of these violations, most have been quite small, in accordance with the slow tempo of Soviet probing tactics. (A recent outright violation was an exception. Article 4 of the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War of June 22, 1973 required the Soviet Union to inform the United States of Arab preparations for the 1973 war, about which the Russians clearly knew a great deal. A mere 104 days passed between the signature of the agreement and its clear-cut violation.) Naturally the Soviet Union does not live up to the "spirit" of international understandings, but there is no duplicity at all in this case because Soviet diplomacy explicitly rejects that concept. In fact, Soviet leaders have been frank in stating that only the actual language of treaties is binding, so that everything not explicitly disallowed will be treated as fair game by them. It has been *Western* statesmen who have insisted that this or that summit, or treaty, has generated a binding "spirit" of cooperation.

A nation of lawyers such as ours should hardly be incapable of dealing with this particular problem. The Soviet refusal to accept voluntary inhibitions for the sake of the "spirit" of things merely requires that arms-control agreements be drafted very carefully indeed, in all necessary detail. The Soviet position is in fact quite traditional; Russians accept the necessity of fulfilling treaties (*pacta sunt servanda*) but they also maintain the hidden conditional clause, "so long as conditions do not change"—as do many others who will also break treaties if their interests are no longer served by them. This does not mean that the Soviet Union is not a fit party for arms control by treaty. It merely requires the United States to be ready at all times to make violation unprofitable.

None of the other obstacles to effective arms control caused by the peculiarities of Soviet conduct is decisive either. For example, it is true that the Soviet negotiating style, with its refusal to make good-will exchanges from issue to issue, greatly

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prolongs the process, but on the other hand, Soviet negotiators are very patient, and Soviet policy does not lack persistence. There is therefore plenty of time to overcome the additional complications created by ferocious haggling on each point. Certainly it should not be beyond the tenacity of our diplomats to suffer prolonged bargaining.

The structural obstacle of Soviet party politics is not so easily dismissed. Now that Ustinov, defense minister and former chief of military production, is overtly identified as a top-level leader, it is evident that the coalition of the "metal eaters" with the secret police and the armed forces is more powerful than ever. Even the traditionally optimistic analysts of the CIA concede that the Soviet Union is now allocating between 11 per cent and 13 per cent of its gross national product to military purposes, as compared to roughly 5.5 per cent for the United States; other reputable observers reject the CIA estimates as too low and argue for 15 or even 17 per cent, almost three times the American proportion. All seem to agree that Soviet defense expenditure has been increasing at a steady rate of roughly 4.5 per cent per year, for many years, and this too is much higher than the American rate, which was actually negative between 1968 and 1972, and which even now, when outlays on strategic weapons have increased, stands at *less* than 3 per cent, net of inflation.

The contrast in these figures suggests that the Soviet interest in equitable arms control is bound to be rather limited. But even this obstacle is not insurmountable. First of all, experts on the Soviet Union assure us that the coalition is not entirely dominant in the top echelon of the Soviet leadership. While it is true that the earlier plans for a major expansion of consumer-goods production have been dropped, the present leadership is making really huge investments in agriculture and it is steadily increasing the effort going into light industries. Such considerations must moderate in some degree the claims of the "metal eaters" on Soviet resources, and this in turn suggests that there may be room for successful arms control. Of course this is only true of weapons systems and forces that are particularly costly—as opposed to those that are particularly destabilizing or destructive—but that still leaves plenty of scope for arms control.

Nor should the obstacle of secrecy be overestimated. True, it is most unfortunate that the Soviet government insists on denying to its own citizens and to the outside world all manner of information, military or not, even when it gains no possible advantage from doing so. It would be much better for all concerned if the Soviet Union were to adopt the practices of most civilized states and publish its force-building plans in advance. The lack of advance information does mean that the huge advantage that comes from negotiating over force-building *plans*, as opposed to actual deployments, is irremediably lost. But the need to wait until weapons are brought out into the open to be tested need not utterly preclude successful arms control. Even if it would be preferable to negotiate before the momentum of such investments has had an opportunity to develop, a rational calculation of mutual advantages should still serve to limit armaments, at least in those cases when *further* outlays still to be made are sufficiently great, and the likelihood of a determined American response is sufficiently credible.

The effect of Russian secrecy on verification is not decisive either. It must be conceded that the lack of truthful budget data, the lack of a Soviet technical press on military production, and the lack of other sources of circumstantial knowledge make it very difficult to interpret visual and electronic data to verify compliance with arms-control agreements. But on the other hand, verification ultimately requires positive proof rather than circumstantial evidence. If a violation must be proved to American and world opinion as well as to Soviet delegates in consultative meetings, generic evidence will not suffice in any case; in fact, usually only the photography matters.

Nor does the Russian fondness for probing tactics to create gaps in limitation agreements while fully exploiting bona-fide loopholes make a stable arms-control regime impossible. It does mean that the United States must expect probing operations to begin as soon as an agreement is signed, and that it must be ready to take firm action to stop violations—any violations, however small—as soon as they are detected. It is of course fatal to mute protests and to refrain from sanctions in order to preserve the "atmosphere of détente," and it is quite useless to complain in general terms; unless appropriate retaliation is convincingly threatened for each specific violation, complaints will simply be ignored. It should be normal American practice, for example, to suspend all U.S.-Soviet negotiations, on *all* issues, military or not, as soon as there is fully reliable evidence of the deliberate violations of any prior agreements still in force. Failure to do this may harden the Soviet position in general, and it certainly invites further probing: unless there is a prompt and forceful reaction, those Soviet officials of moderate views who had counseled prudence in the pre-violation internal policy debate will be undermined, and the hardline advocates of further probing will be strengthened. Inaction tends to legitimize the prior gains of probing operations while inviting new ones, and since each small step leads to the next, any violation, even if quite inconsequential in itself, must be resisted in full force. For example, when the United States failed to react adequately to the visits of Soviet ballistic-missile submarines to Cuban ports (in violation of an executive agreement), these visits were gradually lengthened until

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the presence of the submarines became a commonplace. Next, supporting facilities were established. American protests led to the removal of noncritical crew facilities, but technically essential maintenance items remained. This situation has now been inherited by the Carter administration as a reality no longer open to challenge. Similarly, the Russians used probing tactics in implementing the SALT-1 accords by taking new submarines out for sea trials before scrapping equal numbers of pre-1964 land-based missiles (or converting older submarines) as required by "agreed interpretation" *K* appended to the 1972 "interim agreement." Again, American complaints on the matter were belated and not forceful. It seems that the Russians blamed the poor weather for the overlap, and that the feeble excuse was accepted. If a new SALT treaty includes similar provisions, "slippages" will no doubt become quite routine.

At a time when the Soviet Union has more than 2,500 nuclear weapons of intercontinental range, it may be difficult for an outsider to understand why its military and civil officials would try so hard to cheat on the rules to deploy a few more weapons here and there, which can add nothing of substance to overall Soviet capabilities. It is hard to resist the impression that for these men there are rewards to be had for cheating successfully, rewards political or bureaucratic. All this is of course very unpleasant, and also at first quite unsettling for those who come to deal with the Soviet Union from the relatively innocent atmosphere of American academia or even American public life. However, so long as the United States acts correctly, —that is, promptly and forcefully—probing tactics can be defeated, or at least contained so as to make their results insignificant from the arms-control viewpoint.

IV

It is therefore clear that none of the peculiarities of Soviet conduct is a decisive obstacle to successful arms control. Whatever is wrong with arms control, it is not the fact that dealings with the Soviet Union must loom large in its pursuit.

The process of elimination has left only one possible culprit: the United States.

While arms control can only be effective in limiting specific deployments under specific arrangements, serving thereby as an alternative to force-building, the United States has consistently misused arms control in pursuit of the abstract goal of "strategic parity." When that concept was challenged, it was redefined by the White House as "essential equivalence," which is equally vague. Neither set of words has any meaning in the reality of weapons or forces. Neither set of words can define negotiating objectives.

While arms control can only be effectively pursued if negotiated limitations are defined with extreme precision, the United States has consistently tolerated ambiguities in its urgent pursuit of agreement for its own sake. As a result, a new and entirely artificial source of U.S.-Soviet tensions has been created. Changes in the Soviet strategic forces that would otherwise have passed almost unnoticed have excited suspicion and resentment when seen in high contrast against the poorly drafted texts of the 1972 Moscow accords. One side-benefit of each arms-control agreement should be to build confidence for the next, but the tension-creating ambiguities of SALT-1 have utterly defeated this purpose.

While effective arms control requires that high standards of compliance be enforced, the United States has consistently allowed Soviet probing to develop without effective challenge. This permissive stance was a natural consequence of the attempt to use SALT as a general sedative in U.S.-Soviet relations. The attempt has undoubtedly failed, SALT having become, on balance, a further source of friction. But in the process, arms control itself has been discredited, since negotiated agreements have been enforced far too loosely in deference to the atmospherics of détente.

Above all, the United States has misused arms control in the attempt to dampen the strategic competition in itself, as if the growth of strategic arsenals were the cause of Soviet-American rivalry rather than merely one of its symptoms, and incidentally a much less dangerous symptom than the growth of non-nuclear forces, whose warlike use is much more likely.

Who are the men in this country who have brought about these consequences that may yet prove to be catastrophic? Some, including a former Secretary of Defense, are essentially technicians, who have nevertheless been allowed to shape strategic policy as if its essence were technical rather than political. Unable to define the benefits of superior strategic-nuclear forces with technical precision, in mathematical terms, entirely unable to comprehend the diffuse political meaning of military capabilities, these technicians who imagine themselves to be strategists see no reason why the United States should strive to keep a strategic superiority which they believe to be meaningless. After all, they can prove with their mathematical models that there is no middle level of capability between the minimum of strike-back deterrence and the unattainable maximum of a disarming counterforce capability. Under attack for having waged war in Indochina, these men have embraced the cause of unilateral arms control with much enthusiasm; the activity has a pleasantly humanitarian connotation and also some intellectual appeal (arms-control models can be interesting) while supposedly entailing no loss in "real" American strength.

Others, sometimes very influential but mostly

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outside government, advocate arms control because it is a respectable vehicle for an isolationist foreign policy. After all, the logical result of abandoning additional forces and retaining only a strike-back capability is to uncouple American nuclear forces from NATO and the other alliances. The United States will still be able to deter any direct nuclear attack upon its own soil, and only the nuclear protection offered to its allies will be sacrificed.

For still others, by no means devoid of influence, arms control is a substitute for disarmament, which to their regret the American people still entirely reject. More or less convincing arms-control arguments can always be invoked, along with technical, economic, and now environmental objections, to oppose any and every strategic weapon that the services want to build. Some of these unilateral disarmers camouflaged as arms controllers simply believe that strategic-nuclear weapons are so destructive that their use cannot ultimately serve any rational purpose, military or political. Some are driven by a passionate desire to change the course of world history, so largely characterized by the dismal consequences of force-building, and they do not accept the prosaic objection that wars are most frequently brought about by the failure to make aggression unprofitable. Others among them oppose American weapons because they are American, and remain quite undisturbed by the huge increase in all forms of Soviet military power; believing America to be an essentially evil force in the affairs of mankind, they necessarily regard all instruments of American power as instruments of evil. And some arms-control advocates share none of these beliefs but have merely made arms control their profession, having found work in the dozens of anti-Pentagon lobbies which are now active. Seeing themselves in unequal combat with the vast defense bureaucracy and the still greater military bureaucracies, and forced to contend with a public which obstinately continues to believe that the richest country on earth should also be the most powerful, these professional advocates of arms control concentrate their energies on fighting the Pentagon.

ARMS CONTROL can be no more than a tool of national strategy if it is to be effective. It is an alternative to the other tool, the deployment of weapons, and it can be the superior alternative. But this is only true when its goals are the same, that is, the goals of national strategy: to enhance security at the lowest possible cost and risk. In American policy, arms control has usurped the function of strategy and has become an end in itself. The consequences are now manifest: the unilateral arms control pursued by the U.S. since at least 1964, and the bilateral efforts that culminated in the 1972 Moscow agreements, have diminished rather than enhanced American security; they have not contained the growth of the arsenals of both superpowers; they have increased rather than diminished outlays on U.S. strategic forces; and they have now begun to compromise strategic stability, since the increasing obsolescence of an old bomber force and the approaching vulnerability of American land-based missiles will soon leave the submarine-missile force exposed to undivided Soviet counterforce efforts. As a result of these unhappy trends, we may be approaching a new period of acute instability in which we will be forced to undertake very expensive build-up programs on a crash basis. One consequence is already with us: the trust that allies can place in American nuclear protection has been sharply diminished, the bonds of alliance have been weakened, and powerful incentives have been created for nuclear proliferation.

American strategic policy has been dominated for more than a decade by the overwhelming desire to bring the Soviet-American competition to an end. Arms control could never serve such an unstrategic purpose, and its use to mask a renunciatory passivity in the face of the Soviet build-up has merely served to compromise a perfectly respectable tool of strategic policy.

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Edmund Wilson vs. America

Robert Alter

> The United States is not a nation in the sense that England or France is. It is a society, a political system, which is still in an experimental state. Hence our panics of various kinds.
> —Edmund Wilson, *A Piece of My Mind*

EDMUND WILSON is not an easy writer to get in clear perspective, and most of those who have discussed him in recent years have chosen instead to envelop him in a hagiographical haze. He was, so the litany runs, "the most important American critic of his generation," or, in a still more ubiquitous formula, "our most distinguished man of letters." The large volume just published of Wilson's *Letters on Literature and Politics: 1912–1972** sheds a good deal of light on the truth and half-truth of both those labels, but reviewers in general have responded chiefly by echoing the blurbs, apparently dazzled or daunted by the teeming variety of Wilson's intellectual interests in half a century at the writer's trade.

Wilson was, to be sure, a deservedly commanding presence in American intellectual life from the late 20's onward, but, paradoxically, there is also something ultimately *manqué* about his literary career. He achieved much that was impressive, but never—on the evidence of his own early letters—what he had initially aspired to achieve. The fault was partly in the nature of his talents, partly in the nature of his relation to American culture.

The issue of Wilson's talents has been touched on discreetly and perceptively by Harry Levin in a review of the *Letters* in the *New York Review of Books*. Levin notes the extent to which Wilson's letters show him a person at least as engaged in social, political, and historical problems as in literary matters, and proposes that "If Wilson is to be categorized as a critic, it must be as a critic at large, a critic of everything." This is not meant to damn Wilson by prodigal praise, for, with his formidable intellectual resources, he did astonishingly well as a "critic of everything." Nevertheless, the remark brings one up short, makes one realize that in fact the specifically literary aspect of Wilson's large production was relatively modest. As literary criticism that has more than merely journalistic or antiquarian value, one could confidently designate a single book, *Axel's Castle*, and perhaps ten essays, most of them from *The Wound and the Bow* and *The Triple Thinkers*. Levin also observes that to call Wilson a "man of letters" rather than a novelist, poet, dramatist (or even, I would add, a critic) is to concede that he failed to accomplish all he would have wanted to in any single department of literature. To cite the contrasting instance of Stendhal, a figure who was one of Wilson's own touchstones of literary excellence, here was someone who wrote thousands of pages of travel books, music history, art history, journalism, autobiography, literary and political pamphlets, while also maintaining a voluminous correspondence and journal; yet we do not speak of Stendhal as a great 19th-century "man of letters" because, beyond all this activity, he produced two novels that are among the supreme masterpieces of European fiction.

The hopes that the young Edmund Wilson had for his own writing were of course bound to be limited by the reach of his talent. The hopes he entertained for American culture involve more complex and shifting issues, and it is those I would like to explore, particularly in the light of his letters.

As early as his freshman year at Princeton, in 1913, Wilson was self-consciously looking for the emergence of a worthy literary culture in America and was already speaking of what he read in the authoritative tones of an arbiter of taste. "In my present search," he writes a prep-school friend, "for American literary art, I have discovered two masterpieces—Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* and Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*." (A quarter of a century later, he would produce celebrated critical essays on both writers.) Wilson had a thorough grounding in Greek and Latin literature, and at Princeton, under the tutelage of Christian Gauss, he did extensive reading in modern French and, to a lesser degree, Italian, but he often seems to have regarded European literature before

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all else as a necessary frame of reference and judgment for seeing American literature in proper perspective.

After graduating from Princeton and serving during the war in France in the medical corps, Wilson came to New York to launch his literary career, working briefly first at *Vanity Fair*, then at the *New Republic* in 1920-21. By the spring of 1921, he concluded that he needed more time in Europe to prepare himself for his future endeavors, and so he went off on a six-month tour of France, England, and Italy. A letter written in Paris (July 5, 1921) to his fellow Princetonian, F. Scott Fitzgerald, is particularly revealing about Wilson's stance between the Old World and the New:

> In America I feel so superior and culturally sophisticated in comparison to the rest of the intellectual and artistic life of the country that I am in danger of regarding my present attainments as an absolute standard and am obliged to save my soul by emigrating into a country which humiliates me with a solid perfection of a standard arrived at by way of Racine, Molière, La Bruyère, Pascal, Voltaire, Vigny, Renan, Taine, Flaubert, Maupassant, and Anatole France. I don't mean to say, of course, that I can actually do better work than anybody else in America; I simply mean that I feel as if I had higher critical standards and that, since in America all standards are let down, I am afraid mine will drop, too; American savant and artist should beware of falling victim to the ease with which a traditionless and half-educated public . . . can be impressed, delighted, and satisfied.

A good deal of Wilson's future enterprise is adumbrated in these sentences. "Emigrating" of course refers to intellectual tourism and is not intended to suggest an actual change of residence: though this was the great decade of American literary expatriates, Wilson urgently needed an American climate in which to flourish, needed, in fact, the exasperating challenge of that traditionless, half-educated public whose mentor he, with his higher critical standards, could become. Perhaps he was too confident, both at this juncture and later, in assuming there were objective critical touchstones, of which he himself had taken possession, and so did not allow sufficiently for the role of personal sensibility in critical judgment. His brief catalogue of French classics, which is actually something of a hodgepodge, is a case in point, mingling as it does Vigny and Voltaire, setting Maupassant and Anatole France on a level with Flaubert. (Such anomalies of judgment were by no means limited to Wilson's early years: much later, for example, he would praise Malraux in his correspondence as the great successor to Proust in the French novel.)

But the quirkiness of these "higher critical standards" was the defect of a virtue, for Wilson was inclined to overvalue writers who exhibited the qualities of clarity, stylistic felicity, and scrupulous craftsmanship which American literature commonly lacked, and was particularly receptive to writers who addressed themselves directly to the sorts of social and cultural questions he meant to confront as the catalyst of an American renaissance. For if Europe provided the standards, he imagined America as the place of fermentation for a vital new literature in this early postwar period. In the same letter to Fitzgerald, though he recognizes the enormous disadvantages of a country that has only "one layer of 18th-century civilization on the East Coast," he also expresses "a great hope for New York as a cultural center; it seems to me that there is a lot doing intellectually in America just now—America seems to be actually beginning to express herself in something like an idiom of her own."

It was Wilson's self-appointed task over the next three decades to prod, badger, scold, and encourage the American literary world into having the resolution and patience to fashion an idiom of its own. One of the most admirable things about his letters is the way he persisted, as literary editor of the *New Republic* and as the friendly correspondent of so many poets, novelists, and critics, in demanding precise and clear writing, rigorous fidelity to whatever were the facts under discussion, and a firm sense of appropriate form. "You have never quite mastered a satisfactory expository style," he roundly rebukes R.P. Blackmur in a 1930 letter, and goes on to offer him some plainspoken advice—alas, ignored—about how to correct his engimatic terseness: "I wish you would take more words and say what you mean more exactly."

In a 1943 letter to Morton D. Zabel, a critic who was also a close personal friend, he is no more sparing. Shrewdly citing a passage from a piece by Zabel on Graham Greene in which the argument is obfuscated by intellectual phrase-making, Wilson frankly describes it as "an example of brilliant writing running aground in abstraction," and proceeds to analyze it phrase by phrase in order to show exactly how the writing has run aground. He cajoles another friend, Alfred Kazin, for saying Trotsky was assassinated with a pickaxe instead of an ice axe and for other blemishes of imprecision in his writing. (The admonitions seem not to have stuck: in a recent memoir in the *New Republic*, Kazin reports Wilson as "once writing that he had lost himself in five thousand years of Jewish history," though Wilson, with more careful attention to historical chronology, actually wrote, and more than once, *three* thousand years.) A relentless emender of his own texts—the *New Yorker* used to send him proof after proof to revise, and he sometimes found himself correcting his prose in his dreams—he tolerated neither

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local sins of commission in English usage nor, at the other end of the scale, the omission of the most esoteric information if it were relevant to the subject at hand. A characteristic measure of his seriousness in these matters and the learning he brought to bear on them is a 1949 letter to Gilbert Highet in which he chides Highet for failing to mention in *The Classical Tradition* the 10th-century German nun, Hrotswitha, who wrote Latin plays modeled on Terence.

"Work" is a central concept for Wilson, his favored term for all forms of intellectual activity —it figures importantly in the passage above from the 1921 letter to Fitzgerald—and his lifelong insistence on its salutary value may reflect his most substantial legacy from his Calvinist forebears. He tended to admire writers like Joyce whose books showed the effects of painstaking work in their composition, and it is characteristic that in his later years he should dismiss most of Gertrude Stein's writing after *Three Lives* because her fictional experiments reflected "very little at all exacting work." Writing to Louise Bogan in April 1931, after she had suffered a nervous breakdown, Wilson recalls having undergone a similar ordeal two years earlier (he actually was pushing ahead with a chapter of *Axel's Castle* at the sanitorium to which he was sent!), and urges her to go on with the work of writing which is her overriding responsibility to society as an intellectual:

> We have to take life—society and human relations—more or less as we find them—and there is no doubt that they leave much to be desired. The only thing we can really make is our work. And deliberate work of the mind, imagination, and hand, done, as Nietzsche said, "notwithstanding," in the long run remakes the world.

One way of describing the curve of Wilson's career from 1931 onward is as a gradual fading of this faith in work's power to remake the world while he remained steadfastly committed to exacting intellectual work as a practical ethos. The 20's were still a time of multifarious possibilities both for himself and for American culture as he imagined it. In addition to his criticism, he was writing plays, poetry, a novel—*I Thought of Daisy*, his first book which was neither a compilation nor a collaboration, did not appear until 1929, when he was thirty-four—and even a ballet, in which he vainly tried to persuade Charlie Chaplin to star, written for "full orchestra, movie machine, typewriters, radio, phonograph, riveter, electromagnet, alarm clock, telephone bells, and jazz band." Beyond such schemes for creating an American Jazz Age *Gesamtkunstwerk*, he was encouraging and exhorting Fitzgerald, Dos Passos, Hemingway, John Peale Bishop, Allen Tate, Rolphe Humphries, and others to produce the exemplary new American fiction and poetry that he had dreamed of since his days at Princeton. By 1928, he had clearly formulated the project for his first integrally conceived critical book, the study of major English and French modernists that would appear in 1931 as *Axel's Castle*.

The book did a great deal to consolidate Wilson's intellectual authority, and it has rightly been regarded as a landmark in the critical assimilation of literary modernism. His ability to define the common enterprise of these writers, scarcely half-a-dozen years after the initial publication of *Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, Yeats's "The Tower," and the concluding volumes of Proust, still seems altogether remarkable. Placing his writers in a large literary-historical and conceptual framework, Wilson imparted through his argument a vision of what serious criticism might do to explicate and evaluate the difficult new literature of an innovative age.

Even though *Axel's Castle* does include in its final chapter a direct critique of the divorce of literature from life in the modernists, a reader is more likely to come away from this pioneering exposition with a sense of the intricate formal complexity and imaginative richness of the writers Wilson discusses and in many ways admires. His correspondence is therefore especially instructive about *Axel's Castle*, because in several letters he makes clear that he intended the book largely as an *attack* on European modernism in behalf of indigenous American literary values which he still hoped were in the process of emerging. The most revealing of these statements occurs in an undated 1928 letter to Maxwell Perkins, his editor at Scribner's, which was meant to serve as a prospectus for the book. While expressing his high esteem for Yeats, Proust, and Joyce, among his six chosen authors, Wilson complains about the "resignationism in regard to the world at large" which all of them exhibit. "I believe that any literary movement which tends so to paralyze the will, to discourage literature from entering into action, has a very serious weakness; and I think the time has now about come for a reaction against it." Such a sense of moral exhaustion, he suggests, is understandable in postwar Europe but utterly inappropriate to Americans. "I believe—or rather, I hope—that the reaction of which I speak may come first in the United States. I seem to see certain signs of it: in another generation or two, we may be leading the world intellectually."

Axel's Castle, then, is not only a summing up of the great literary production of the 20's but also, through its negative critique, an intimation of the hopes for a literary future that Wilson had nurtured during the 20's—a book which, despite its European horizon, is urgently American in its intention and perspective. These American hopes, however, were becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. To begin with, the writers, many of them Wilson's personal friends, who he thought might create a powerful American antithesis to European

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modernism simply did not live up to what he had imagined to be their promise. By the end of the 30's, most of their careers were stranded on the various shoals of alcoholism, emotional crack-up, ideological stridency, self-indulgent mannerism, or plain intellectual lassitude.

There was, of course, vital work going on in these years in American literature, but it seems to have been largely outside the purview of Wilson's sensibility, or outside his Princeton-based Northeastern set of social and cultural connections, or both. The most original American novelist of this period was Faulkner, and Wilson somewhat grudgingly recognized him as that, but he disapproved of Faulkner's "carelessness" and could only have regarded his Southern-Gothic doomsaying as an American version of European resignationism. Robert Frost he "never cared for at all" (letter to Christian Gauss, May 15, 1944), and Wallace Stevens (surely our major modernist poet as Faulkner was our one modernist master in the novel) Wilson tended to discount, admitting only that *Harmonium* was a fine achievement of a rather minor sort, and disapproving on principle of what he regarded as the slippery ambiguity of Stevens's symbolism.

MEANWHILE, by the end of the 20's, Wilson's energies and attention, like those of so many American intellectuals, were increasingly deflected from literature to politics. The beginning of this shift was triggered by the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. "I grow more interested myself in American affairs every year," he wrote John Peale Bishop in 1928, and speculated that the ideal vehicle for an expression of this interest might be a book on the Sacco-Vanzetti affair, a project he was not quite prepared to undertake. With the onset of the Depression, Wilson plunged into political journalism, traveling around the country to meet with militant union leaders, covering the labor disturbances in Harlan County, and assembling a book on the troubled state of the nation which he called *The American Jitters*.

At the same time, predictably, he was applying himself to the study of Marxist literature, and by 1934 he had conceived the idea of the book that would become *To the Finland Station*. It seems to me important to underline the peculiarity of Wilson's involvement with the radical Left, for it exhibits a perfect continuity of outlook and sensibility with the positions he took both before and after the 30's. He was attracted to Marxist thought for the possible alternatives it could suggest to the gross inequities and the shambling ineptitudes of the prevailing American system, but he was never "radicalized," as the idiom of the 60's would have put it, with the unpleasant implication of total transformation through some sort of industrial processing. The point is not only that Wilson, as he makes clear in a late letter, never seriously contemplated becoming a member of the Communist party, but that he strenuously preserved an inner distance as an American from Marxist doctrine. Writing to Allen Tate (May 28, 1930), he states this position through a shrewd comparison:

> I am going further and further to the Left all the time and have moments of trying to be converted to American Communism in the same way that Eliot makes an effort to become converted to Anglo-Catholicism. It is not that Communism in itself isn't all right, but that all that sort of thing in America seems even more unrelated to real life than Catholicism does in England.

After six months in Russia in 1935 studying at the Marx-Engels Institute as part of his work on *To the Finland Station*, he also rapidly revised his assumption that Communism on European soil was "all right." Shortly before the trip, he was willing to defend Stalin as a principled Marxist leader who for that reason alone could never be guilty of "megalomaniac imperialist ambitions" like those of Napoleon (letter to Dos Passos, January 11, 1935), but after his return, his letters to his friends, many of whom were fellow-travelers publicly justifying the Moscow Trials then unfolding, contain forthright denunciations of totalitarian repression in the Soviet Union and of the naiveté of American intellectuals. He now recognized Stalin as a sinister and reactionary figure, but, what is more significant, he also perceived a causal connection between the climate of classic Marxist thought and the horrors of Stalinist practice. "Certainly Marxism itself is partly to blame," he wrote A.J. Muste (December 31, 1937), alluding to the strategy of character assassination inaugurated by Marx to discredit his ideological rivals, and then speculated further whether the perversion of justice might be a direct consequence of a basic Marxist doctrine: "The Marxists have been—and are still being—sadly misled through believing in the dialectic as a supernatural power which will bring them salvation if they trust in it, without the necessity of thought or virtue on their part."

The stress on the necessity of thought and virtue gives us the quintessential American Wilson, insisting on the sturdy moral values of his Protestant ancestors while firmly rejecting their system of belief or any modern substitute for it. (By now, that comparison of Communism with Eliot's Anglo-Catholicism had assumed more extensive ramifications for him.) This stalwart secularist's critique of the deification of the dialectic in Marxism becomes a major thrust of *To the Finland Station*. That book had initially been conceived as a sympathetic exposition of the Marxist intellectual heritage, an attempt, as Wilson wrote Dos Passos early in 1935, "to see Marx and Lenin as part of the humanistic tradition which they came out of." A certain sympathy of historical imagination is evident in the book, but what may have been be-

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gun as something of a celebration proved to be a good deal more like a refutation. In following the socialist tradition from the French Revolution to Lenin, Wilson clearly wants to cling to the ennobling vision of a society more egalitarian and more humane than our own, but he is keenly aware of how easily such ideologies can provide the justification for barbarism. "There is in Marx," he writes in *To the Finland Station,* "an irreducible discrepancy between the good which he proposes for humanity and the ruthlessness and hatred he inculcates as a means of arriving at this—a discrepancy which, in the history of Marxism, has given rise to much moral confusion." The judiciousness of the perception and of its formulation shows Wilson at his best as a "critic of everything," and illustrates the enduring strength of this book which he published in 1940 as the summation of a decade of political involvement.

CURIOUSLY, Wilson characterized *To the Finland Station* in a letter to Allen Tate as "a sort of companion piece to *Axel's Castle,*" but the bracketing of these two disparate books may make more sense than is first apparent. The two studies, of course, stand symmetrically at the end of the 20's and 30's respectively as intellectual stock-takings of what engaged the attention of the intelligentsia in those two very different decades. More substantively, just as *Axel's Castle* is ultimately a critique, undertaken from the perspective of an old-fashioned American morality, of the devolution of Europe's literary enterprise from the aesthetic tenets of Romanticism through Symbolism to the modernists, *To the Finland Station* is much the same sort of half-admiring but finally negative critique, adopting a similar American perspective, of the devolution of European political thought from the forerunners of socialism to Lenin. In both books, Wilson tends to identify with the adversary point of departure of the movement he is following, seeing both Symbolism with its offshoots and Marxism as grand strategies of assault against the decaying intellectual foundations of bourgeois society. In each instance, however, his sympathies are frustrated, for each of the two revolutions ultimately fails: the literary effort to turn away from the deadening bourgeois world results in an atrophy of the will, "a sullenness, a lethargy, a sense of energies ingrown and sometimes festering," while the political effort to remake the world through an act of rational will leads to a hypertrophy of that faculty in the brutal imposition of tyranny.

The crucial point of divergence in the analogy between Wilson's two intellectual projects is that by 1940 he had none of the hopes he had had in 1930 for an "American reaction" to the European tradition which seemed to have worked itself into a historical cul-de-sac. He had placed behind him both modernism and Marxism, and he was now left contemplating an American landscape in which he could discern no major developments, either literary or political, for which he could feel much affinity.

The poignant paradox of Wilson's career is his having achieved his greatest intellectual authority at the very moment when he was bereft of a compelling subject. He remained, as I have said, committed to the practical ethos of a working writer constantly striving for the highest standards, and in article after article, book after book, for the next thirty years he demonstrated the remarkable intelligence and stylistic control with which he could handle virtually any topic. But he was a writer with no more major books to write. Some would make an exception for *Patriotic Gore* (1962), the large study of Civil War literature to which he devoted nearly fifteen years of research, but that book strikes me as an instance of a first-rate mind mesmerized by the literary detritus of third-rate scribblers. Wilson's two important critical-historical books before this one had confronted challenging original writers, but here one must wade through hundreds of pages, often preponderantly quotation and synopsis, dedicated to the work of obscure diarists, pamphleteers, concocters of ephemeral novels and hackneyed verse.

Perhaps one might best view *Patriotic Gore* as a kind of anthology of historical documents arranged in approximately narrative form. If it is thought of as historiography, it is historiography of a narrowly tendentious kind, quite lacking in the breadth of historical imagination that informed *To the Finland Station.* For all the documents are marshaled in order to demonstrate the reductive thesis of the book's introduction—that the Civil War was fought not in the least to free the slaves but as all wars, whatever the ideological claims made for them, are invariably fought, to satisfy the blind biologically conditioned instinct of gluttony that drives one power-unit to swallow up another. It is tempting but a little imprecise to describe *Patriotic Gore* as Wilson's effort to come to terms with America in the era following World War II (the cold war visibly looms behind the Civil War in the book), but it is even more the expression of an unresolved ambivalence, embodying both the author's abiding fascination with American culture and his profound disaffection from it.

WILSON's mind was so lively and continually curious that a reader may not immediately notice an element which becomes increasingly pronounced in his later career, surfacing in the introduction to *Patriotic Gore* and, nine years later, entirely taking over *Upstate,* the last book he lived to see into print. The element I refer to is the dyspeptic vision of an authentic American crank. History had skidded on past him with an impudent noise, like the motorcycles of

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the teenage hooligans roaring past his house in Talcottville, New York, and he was prepared alternately to lambaste it for the ruinous career it had taken or to remove himself as much as possible to less abrasive objects of contemplation. If Wilson became more conservative in his long last phase, the term must be construed culturally rather than politically, as a pronounced preference for a more hopeful time in American life, before technological growth and centralized government began to run out of control. It is a conservative stance very much in an American tradition of stubborn individualism, profoundly suspicious of collective allegiances and governmental authority, that goes back at least to Thoreau.

The suspiciousness in Wilson's case actually becomes an uncompromising cynicism about the whole realm of politics. Russia and America are seen as equally, mindlessly, imperialist, but if Wilson in principle damns both impartially, it is toward America, as the outrage near at hand, that he particularly directs his vehemence. Daniel Aaron, a little confusingly, has described Wilson politically as an "unspecified radical independent," a characterization which makes sense if one stresses the first and the last of the three terms. The isolationist thread in the later Wilson's thought sounds like the Right, but his heated opposition to the military establishment and to chauvinist nationalism sounds more like the Left. His notion of the fundamentally sinister nature of American government, sketched out in the introduction to *Patriotic Gore* and argued for in *The Cold War and the Income Tax* (1963), the pamphlet he wrote after his troubles with the IRS, is reminiscent of both the Right and the Left.

As early as the beginning of the 50's, Wilson was articulating in a letter to Dos Passos (November 27, 1951) a sense of having been left behind by the times: "I'm feeling as I never have before that I belong to a past era from which I'm not sure I'm capable of emerging, as I see myself in relation to the rest of the world as a probably rather moldering and mellow old codger from the frivolous 20's who looks back on a world they can never know." This mildly ironic self-designation as an old codger became a frequent persona of Wilson's in the ensuing years, and by the 60's mellowness was often not part of it. There was little of American literature or American culture at large that emerged after the 20's which in any way spoke to him, and by the time he wrote *Upstate,* he found himself going back before the 20's—by now manifestly the age of a renaissance that had failed—to family antecedents amid American beginnings in the hardy rural civilization of the 19th century.

This growing identification, however, with the vanished and vanishing past did not prevent Wilson from continuing through the last two decades of his activity to be the finest intellectual journalist we have had. If he could no longer get his bearings on the mainstream of contemporary life, he was able to make himself a brilliant guide to its obscurer tributaries. He himself notes in his letters that he seems to have become obsessed with minorities—the Jews, the Iroquois, the Haitians, the Canadians, the Hungarians. In the light he threw on these groups through his writing, based on sedulous reading as well as on astute personal observation, he was in effect buttressing his own adversary sense of American identity, implicitly arguing for a civilization on this continent that could accommodate variety and quirky individuality, that could resist the terrific pressures of conformity and centralization which he detested and feared. That ideal, as some of the more polemical stances of his later years illustrate, could have a cranky side, but in an age of mass societies and global communications it provides a context of attentiveness to the divergent and the peculiar, and as a realized imaginative quality it marks much of Wilson's best writing in his last two decades.

ANOTHER way to state the contradiction of Wilson's final phase is that he had become a sage with many admirers but at the same time a cultural mentor without real disciples. He enjoyed administering intellectual reproof and he was uncomfortable when his authority as reprover was not accepted. This, I believe, was the real reason for his rift with Vladimir Nabokov and not the much-publicized difference over Nabokov's translation of Pushkin. When Nabokov came to this country in 1940, Wilson could generously take him up as a protégé and a friend, seeing in him a talented new English writer with an exotic cultural and linguistic background. Not having enough Russian to tackle Nabokov's Russian novels, he could not have gauged the extent of his friend's actual achievement. When, with *Lolita* and *Pale Fire,* Nabokov produced English works of real genius, in a range of originality and formal complexity wholly beyond the flawed but "promising" books of Fitzgerald, Dos Passos, and their like, Wilson was shut out of the role he must have envisaged for himself (his letters contain not a single response as a reader to either of these books), and he seems to have reasserted his authority by attacking Nabokov's approach to translation. Once having been opposed, Wilson could be relentless. One of the saddest moments in his correspondence occurs when, after receiving a kind and conciliatory letter from Nabokov, who had heard of his heart attack, he harshly dismisses the gesture of renewed friendship by saying, "it always makes [Nabokov] cheerful to think that his friends are in bad shape" (letter to Helen Muchnic, March 18, 1971).*

* The full correspondence between Wilson and Nabokov is being prepared for publication by Simon Karlinsky.

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There were, as the letters reveal, relationships and occasions of this sort in Wilson's life in which he was led to mistake his own personal demands for demanding standards, but he was a man of deep, fastidiously acquired culture, and his strong commitment to high intellectual standards for their own sake remains impressive. Toward the very end, in the ante-sepulchral gloom of *Upstate,* he permitted himself to say that humanity's eons-slow progress toward the bare approximation of civilization was beginning to "discourage and bore" him. But he was in fact the least bored of modern intellectuals, constantly finding new materials to read and new scenes to explore that powerfully engaged his attention, excited him to further inquiry. In his late years, in connection with making his way through Macaulay's *History of England* for the first time, he spoke of undertaking a systematic plan to read "all the celebrated books that I haven't read." Perusing some pages of the Talmud in translation, he admits they are "difficult at first to get the hang of" but contemplates settling down to reading the Talmud in its entirety as the only way to understand it properly (letter to Alfred Kazin, October 29, 1954). Perhaps in emulation of his learned ministerial grandfather, but also out of an intrinsic desire to know what the Bible was really like in the original, he began the study of Hebrew at Princeton Theological Seminary when he was near sixty, an intellectual adventure that resulted in his brilliant essay on first reading Genesis in Hebrew and, indirectly, in his book on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Still later, he began Hungarian, and in one letter of his declining years he wistfully regrets that he has not enough time left to acquire Chinese. Even in his most prickly cultural conservatism, he continued to be a passionate humanist, endlessly drawn to the wide spectrum of poetry, fiction, history, philosphy, essays, and memoirs by great figures and small through which people in various times and places have sought to give coherence and permanence to their experience. His plainspoken Yankee individualism at its best shines through his writing in the steady clarity with which, after patient work with difficult materials, he manages to "get the hang of" the most unfamiliar and daunting subjects, for himself and for his readers.

A recurrent formula he uses in his letters to his friends is to report that he has begun reading for the first time some books or series of books—by Macaulay, Gibbon, John Jay Chapman, Kate Chopin, or whomever—which, contrary to prevalent intellectual prejudice, "I find extraordinarily interesting." It is an assertion, I think, that many future readers will still be moved to make of Wilson's own far-ranging work, vivified as it is by his deep curiosity about culture and history, about the kaleidoscopic variety of human action and thought. The American efflorescence he had hoped for and tried to encourage in his early years proved to be a mirage, and the fading of the vision left him with a residue of bitterness, but his writing sharply registers his unflagging excitement with the life of the mind, and that is no mean legacy to have given American culture.

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Carter in Asia: McGovernism without McGovern

Chalmers Johnson

THE Carter administration has undertaken three major foreign-policy initiatives in East Asia. Each of them is questionable on its individual merits, and all are questionable in terms of what they suggest when linked together. These initiatives are, first, the announced intention to withdraw unilaterally the U.S. ground forces stationed in the Republic of Korea; second, the implementation against Japan of a new policy to prevent the reprocessing of spent fuel for nuclear power reactors; and, third, the search for a formula whereby the United States can abandon Taiwan and recognize Peking while limiting the political damage here and elsewhere.

Let us begin with the case of Korea. On January 16, 1975, two weeks after leaving the governorship of Georgia and only a month after declaring his candidacy for the Presidency, Jimmy Carter stated that he favored pulling U.S. troops out of South Korea. In January 1977, barely a week after Carter had taken office, Vice President Mondale announced in Tokyo that American ground forces would be withdrawn from the Korean peninsula. This decision was made unilaterally, without negotiations among any of the parties concerned: the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan.

Why was the decision made? No convincing answer has ever been given. It was certainly not a matter of continuing or fulfilling a policy initiated in a previous administration—indeed, as recently as November 1975 the United States had stated that it had no intention of withdrawing its troops from South Korea, despite the UN General Assembly resolution of that month calling on it to do so.

President Carter justified the decision by stating that Korea was now sufficiently developed economically to defend itself. But if this is to be the criterion of America's security activities, then why should it not apply to Western Europe, which is infinitely better able to defend itself than Korea? Yet proposals for U.S. troop withdrawals from Europe have not merely been silenced; the U.S. government says that it intends to move to Europe the last American division stationed in Korea!

One apparent reason for the withdrawal decision was to bring American pressure to bear on President Park Chung Hee because of his unsatisfactory record on human rights. In his commencement speech at Notre Dame on May 22, 1977, President Carter made human rights the keystone of his administration's foreign policy, and during the same month, Senator George McGovern supported the administration's proposed withdrawal by arguing that "It will give strong credibility to the renewed American commitment to human rights that President Carter has stressed. We have relations with other repressive governments. But nowhere in the world are we aligned so closely with one so bad." But there are problems with this idea, too—the idea that the withdrawal is based on a concern for human rights. For one thing, even President Park's political enemies in South Korea have come out in opposition to the withdrawal. (The decision to pull out U.S. ground forces has actually made Park more popular than at any time since he revised the constitution in November 1972.) And for another thing, the withdrawal will lower rather than raise U.S. leverage over Park in the area of human rights, just as similar withdrawals have done in the Philippines and Thailand.

Linking the withdrawal to human rights, moreover, totally ignores the danger of subversion from the North that Park is, at least in part, trying to prevent through his restrictions on civil liberties. The best estimate is that, under the emergency provisions of the constitution, Park has imprisoned perhaps 200 people out of a population of 36 million. Americans might recall that, when threatened with a much less credible danger of invasion, we reacted by locking up every American of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast without even giving them a hearing.

Does the withdrawal decision make sense strategically? There is no evidence that it does. The Japanese have been deeply disturbed by the decision. Kase Hideaki, Prime Minister Fukuda's foreign-affairs adviser, said in July that the

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Japanese government could not help but interpret this as a further sign of the abandonment of Asia begun by the United States in Vietnam two years earlier. And the Chinese have not exactly hailed the decision, either. They have only called on Carter to get all U.S. forces out of Korea "completely and immediately." Far from stabilizing the situation strategically, the decision to withdraw troops has exacerbated it. In the absence of a commensurate reduction of Communist forces, the withdrawal may contribute pressure toward nuclear proliferation in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Taiwan once they come to feel truly abandoned. The alternative would be a move in the opposite direction toward greater accommodation with the Soviet Union. Neither the one nor the other consequence would benefit the U.S. strategically.

In Korea itself, the basic asymmetries between the North and the South remain: the more vulnerable targets are in the South, while the North has more equipment and a greater percentage of the GNP going for armaments. The North also shows persistent signs of an intent to attack. The first North Korean tunnel under the DMZ was discovered in November 1974; a second tunnel, capable of accommodating 105 mm. artillery weapons, was found in March 1975. At the time of the collapse of anti-Communist forces in Vietnam, Kim Il Sung journeyed to Peking to enlist Chinese aid for his plan to follow the Vietnamese Communist victories with a new war in Korea. In August 1976, two U.S. officers were ax-murdered in the demilitarized zone. It should not be forgotten in all this that Kim Il Sung is the same leader who once before attacked and devastated the South, a leader who appears impatient to try again before age removes him from the scene.

The situation in Korea itself, then, is hardly propitious tactically for an American troop withdrawal. To the contrary, the withdrawal will force expenditures of billions of dollars by both the U.S. and South Korea in order to replace the U.S. troops that have maintained the peace for twenty-five years.

In short, it is not obvious on what grounds the decision to withdraw American troops from South Korea was made, other than those of a rather obscure promise made during an election campaign.

ANOTHER current problem in East Asia which can be traced to the election campaign is our sharp dispute with Japan over the generation of electric power in nuclear reactors.

Ever since the oil crisis of 1973, Japan has engaged in a serious and comprehensive review of its energy policies, seeking to relieve its almost total dependency on imported Middle East petroleum and, above all, looking for ways to avoid a potentially catastrophic dependence on dwindling world oil supplies by 1985 and beyond. In full awareness of the technological, political, and environmental problems involved, the Japanese have committed themselves to the fast breeder reactor and a "plutonium economy." This is particularly attractive to Japan because it substitutes technological sophistication for the use of scarce natural resources, reduces dependence on foreign supplies, and offers stability of supply.

When the Carter administration came into office, the Japanese had just completed a facility at Tokaimura for reprocessing spent enriched uranium fuel from light-water reactors into plutonium metal for use as a fuel in the fast breeder reactor. The government was also engaged in a serious campaign to convince the public of the feasibility and safety of the new technology. Then the Americans intervened.

Despite the administration's declared intent of shifting the orientation of U.S. foreign policy from summit diplomacy with the Communist nations to a "trilateral" relationship with the advanced industrial democracies, it proceeded to offer a textbook demonstration of how not to deal with an ally. Uninformed about, or indifferent to, Japanese energy policies and the domestic politics surrounding them, the new administration linked the issue of spent uranium reprocessing to that of weapons capability, and on that basis sought to obstruct the opening of the Tokaimura plant. (It was able to do so because the U.S. currently supplies Japan with all of its enriched uranium and has restrictive agreements with Japan requiring American approval of any further reprocessing of the material.) The end result was a compromise that does not solve the problem but merely postpones it. For two years, the Japanese can operate Tokaimura to produce liquid plutonium nitrate but not weapons-potential plutonium metal; in the meantime, the two nations (and the world) will supposedly reevaluate all nuclear fuel cycles.

The handling of the Tokaimura question made a shambles of Carter's professed desire to "consult with allies," and gave the opposition parties in Japan new instances of alleged excessive reliance on the United States with which to attack the government. Issues that for Japan were matters of energy, research and development, and foreign trade became for the Americans matters of security, nuclear nonproliferation, and the avoidance of weapons tests such as that carried out by India in 1974. Carter never showed the slightest interest in the Japanese case itself, only in the precedent it offered to other nations; and the American public, even the politically sophisticated public, remained largely unaware of the entire episode, which Japanese leaders called the most serious clash with the United States in the entire postwar era.

What lay behind the American action? The Japanese never figured it out, particularly since the United States has acknowledged that Japan is the most disarmed of any advanced industrial nation. In any case, the clash put to rest the prospect of improved cooperation and coordin-

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ation between the world's two most powerful democratic allies.

THE new administration's policies toward China tell a similar story. Never once questioning the soundness or the viability of the previous administration's initiatives toward China, Secretary of State Vance declared from the outset that "normalization is the goal." Yet also from the outset, the new administration's efforts were in deep trouble. Without bothering to coordinate these initiatives with China policy, Carter undertook the unilateral withdrawal of forces from Korea; allowed his new Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Richard C. Holbrooke, to begin talks with Hanoi concerning diplomatic recognition; and sent Leonard Woodcock, a domestic trade-union leader with no foreign experience, on a mission to Hanoi. Carter subsequently named Woodcock to head the U.S. Liaison Office in Peking.

These moves undoubtedly confused and irritated the Chinese. A simultaneous approach to all the Asian Communist nations could not fail to disturb China's sense of propriety; the Chinese have long insisted that relations with them be treated as exceptional and unique, not multilateral. More seriously, the initiative toward Hanoi injected the United States into the strained relations between China and Vietnam, a reflection of the Sino-Soviet dispute. The Korean withdrawal decision, whatever the Chinese have said about it in their propaganda, was taken as one more sign of America's unwillingness to maintain the balance of power with the USSR.

Despite this poor beginning, the administration advanced the time of a visit to China by the new Secretary of State from November to August. No reason was given for the change, save the continuing need of the administration for domestic publicity. Vance arrived in China only a week after the 11th Congress of the Chinese Communist party had ended, thereby insuring that one purpose of such a visit, to size up and evaluate the new post-Mao leadership, would be frustrated—that leadership had only barely been installed. The new administration also came to Peking empty-handed in terms of a policy. Instead, it came like a ribbon salesman with a basket of flimsy proposals that would permit the U.S. to grant Peking diplomatic recognition while not appearing to abandon Taiwan, and it asked the Chinese to choose one. Among these bits of camouflage were the suggestions that the United States be allowed to pursue a variant of the "Japanese solution" (ambassador in Peking, liaison office in Taipei); that the United States substitute for the mutual defense treaty with Taiwan a "unilateral declaration of support"; that the United States or private American firms be permitted to sell arms to Taiwan after it had become a province of the Chinese People's Republic; that Peking convert Taiwan into some kind of Hong Kong; and that Peking publicly renounce the use of force against Taiwan. The Chinese were not cooperative, however; they promptly rejected all of these.

Several flaws in the American negotiating stance toward China seem likely to insure that any future policy will be defeated. First, the Americans do not understand, or refuse to take seriously, the well-known Chinese negotiating tactic of seeking concessions, breaking off negotiations after the concessions have been made, and then resuming talks after an interval—but on the condition that the opposite party begin the new round from the most conciliatory position it took in the previous round.

Second, despite the fact that it is an infinitely more powerful nation than China, the United States has allowed itself to become subservient to Chinese initiatives. A long stream of American politicians and other leaders has toured the mainland, but there has not been a single instance of reciprocity at a comparable level by a Chinese leader. And in negotiating, instead of firmly stating an American policy, the U.S. government spends its time trying to find some ingenious formula that will meet China's blunt terms.

The American assessment of the internal Chinese political situation is so uncritical as to be ridiculous. Throughout the summer of 1977, American bureaucrats and journalists hailed the emergence of "pragmatism" on the mainland, failing to note that the principal leaders involved are all septuagenarians, that China has been wracked by political instability for the past eleven years, and that further abrupt changes in the Chinese line cannot be ruled out until a genuine successor generation to the original revolutionaries has emerged and assumed power.

THE results of American moves in East Asia so far are unsatisfactory to all the parties concerned. Teng Hsiao-p'ing has commented that while Secretary Vance may *say* American policy seeks to check the growth of Soviet influence in the world, Chinese leaders do not believe him. The Japanese interpret the new initiatives as a sign of an American retrenchment, unequally implemented and with Asia bearing the brunt. And the Koreans feel isolated, the victims of domestic American political struggles. Only the Russians have reason to be pleased by the trend of events.

On August 17, 1977, the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote editorially: "There appears to be no overall concept or framework governing the Carter policy in Asia, or at least none that is visible." Why has this incoherence come about? Generally speaking, three probable causes may be named for the failures of U.S. policy in East Asia: amateurism, a concern with domestic politics, and an adherence to a covert ideological line.

There can be no mistake about the comparative inexperience of the new President in international affairs, or about his failure to delegate responsi-

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bility to an effective team of experts. The signs of amateurism abound. Richard Holbrooke, for instance, undertook his negotiations with Hanoi without preparing Congress in any way. As a result, Congress terminated these contacts through a joint resolution and left the assistant secretary isolated in an untenable position. Another example: Secretary Vance, in a Tokyo briefing with newsmen after his visit to Peking, carefully avoided saying that progress had been made on the issue of recognition, whereas President Carter announced to the world when he welcomed Vance home that a great deal of progress had been made. No wonder Teng Hsiao-p'ing felt obliged to make public his own acid assessment of the Vance visit. To take a more serious instance of amateurism, the imbroglio with Japan over nuclear power was one that could have been avoided if the area expertise of the State Department and CIA had been sought and utilized.

Amateurism goes beyond instances of poor or uninformed execution of policy; it extends to the staffing of the foreign-relations apparatus itself. Of the thirty-six senior positions in the Department of State, twenty-two have been filled with political appointees, compared with twelve in the previous administration. The pattern is similar in the Department of Defense and other agencies concerned with external affairs. Moreover, these political appointees have all been drawn from one segment of the American political spectrum. They are virtually all young, former staff employees of Senators Mondale, Humphrey, Muskie, McGovern, Church, Case, and Javits, or well-known anti-Vietnam war activists from the bureaucracy or academic life. This so-called junior varsity is not only young and inexperienced in the formulation and conduct of foreign policy, it also has been asked to work under Cabinet officers who in some cases were the leaders of the U.S. effort in Vietnam and who stood for everything to which the junior varsity was violently opposed. This is not a prescription for professionalism or the smooth determination of priorities in government.

Which brings us to the issue of partisan politics. However the President has chosen to manage domestic affairs, he has turned over foreign policy to the "New Politics" wing of the Democratic party, as the list of political appointees to the Departments of State and Defense attests. Virtually none of the nominees for foreign-policy positions from the wing of the party identified with Senator Henry M. Jackson or with the AFL-CIO was subsequently appointed. If the President has acted intentionally in this matter, his purposes would appear to be to bind the party closer together by satisfying its left wing, which has always been more interested in foreign than in domestic problems. But whatever the reason, the results are a lopsided representation of one set of political views in the new foreign-policy bureaucracy.

IT MAY well be that recent trends in U.S. foreign policy can best be explained in terms of this confluence of views, which is to say, in terms of ideology. Mao Tse-tung once characterized the regime of Leonid Brezhnev as "Khrushchevism without Khrushchev." The Carter administration, in its foreign-policy activities, may be called "McGovernism without McGovern."

On October 14, 1977, UN Ambassador Young stated that "The American people [read, the Carter administration] have rejected military activism." Taking Mr. Young and like-minded supporters of the administration at their word, one may say that the prevailing principle that guides U.S. foreign policy today is not the one the President stressed in his election campaign—namely, the replacement of the Nixon-Kissinger preoccupation with the Communist nations by a renewed stress on relations with the democracies—but rather that same principle of "demilitarization," of anti-war activism, which underlay the McGovern candidacy of 1972. Not only have many policy-makers in the new administration been explicitly associated with Senator McGovern's views, but the nomination (subsequently withdrawn) of Theodore Sorensen to head the CIA, and the naming of Paul Warnke as chief SALT negotiator, were both consistent with the theme of demilitarization. Certainly what the administration has undertaken to do in East Asia lends itself to interpretation in this light.

Thus, the reason for the administration's decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Korea may simply be that it is determined to avoid war at any price. Similarly, in the minds of Washington's pacifists, the fact that nuclear reactors are potential sources of materials for weapons would be enough in and of itself to render suspect the Japanese decision to develop nuclear power. The policy of accommodation to China, as well as to Hanoi (and, closer to home, to Cuba) also follows logically from a commitment to demilitarization, which necessarily entails an adjustment to Communist nations and their policies. It is a safe assumption that no one in the present administration would lift a finger to aid Taiwan should that country choose to maintain its independence from the mainland.

As Mao Tse-tung used to stress, correct policies in any period derive from an accurate assessment of the period's "primary contradiction"—that is, its most salient problem. The present American policy toward East Asia strongly suggests that the Carter administration either cannot agree on what the "primary contradiction" is, or has seriously misassessed it. It may still be this country's intention to remain a Pacific power, but one would not know this from the actions undertaken so far by the Carter administration, or from the statements made on its behalf by the ideologues who now staff its foreign-policy offices. Quite the contrary.

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Soviet Psychiatry on Trial

Walter Reich

THE Norwegian psychiatrist said he was worried. He was sure that his Soviet colleagues were abusing their profession in order to suppress dissent. But he was afraid that if the World Psychiatric Association voted to condemn them, as the British were proposing, then all contact might end, and with it any chance for quiet moral suasion.

It was Monday, August 28, 1977, the first day of the WPA's Sixth World Congress of Psychiatry, and the vote would be taken Wednesday. Six years before, at the WPA's Fifth World Congress in Mexico City, attempts to condemn the Soviets had been unsuccessful; the issue had never reached a vote. Since then, reports of Soviet abuse had built up. Appeals had been made that they end the practice of diagnosing political dissidents as mentally ill and of confining them in prison hospitals. The number of known or suspected cases had risen to several hundred. Formerly hospitalized dissidents, such as Leonid Plyushch and Vladimir Bukovsky, were extruded abroad and struck Western psychiatrists who interviewed them as healthy. Groups of psychiatrists around the world began to pressure their national societies to condemn Soviet practices.

After years of uncertainty, a few did. In May of 1977, Britain's Royal College of Psychiatrists, one of the WPA's member societies, voted to ask the world body to condemn "the systematic abuse of psychiatry for political purposes in the USSR" at its upcoming congress. Two weeks later, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, hoping to make the British resolution more acceptable to other psychiatric societies, proposed that it be amended to condemn political abuses not only in the USSR but also "in all countries in which they occur." Then in August, three weeks before the Sixth World Congress was to consider these proposals, the American Psychiatric Association, the WPA's most powerful member society, added one more. It asked the WPA to set up monitoring machinery—a Committee to Investigate Abuse of Psychiatry. The three proposals became items on the congress agenda. Many vowed that the shame of Mexico City would be wiped away in Honolulu.

In fact, though, opinion at the congress was fractured. Six of the world's continents—sixty countries—were depleted of psychiatrists for the occasion. Of the four thousand who came, many were passionate about the issue. Some, like the Norwegian, felt that the resolutions should be defeated in order to maintain ties that could be used to soften Soviet practices. Others doubted the truth of the accusations, or argued that since psychiatrists everywhere served as agents of social control, it would be hypocritical to single out Soviet abuses that were different only in degree. Still others, primarily from the Eastern bloc, denied the accusations altogether, labeling them the inventions of anti-Soviet slanderers. The remainder, mainly from the U.S. and Western Europe, felt that anything short of condemnation would represent a second betrayal of psychiatry.

Throughout the congress, the Soviets complained that a conspiracy was afoot. In a way, they were right. Some weeks before, Sidney Bloch, an Oxford psychiatrist who had co-authored a book arguing that Soviet psychiatrists were systematically abusing their profession for political ends,* wrote to colleagues in Europe and North America asking them to work together in Honolulu in the interest of passing the resolutions. About two dozen met in his hotel room on the eve of the congress, and, of these, a core group—about fifteen—continued to meet through the rest of the week to exchange information and offer mutual support. As the vote drew near, others joined, including the British and Australian voting delegates. Most had never met before. About half were from the United States; a third from England, Canada, and Australia; and a few from France and West Germany. Two were Soviet psychiatrists who had emigrated to the West. *Izvestia* would later refer to this loose caucus as a Zionist clique. In fact, its members shared no particular ideology or religion—not even a unanimous view about the motivations behind the Soviet misdiagnoses. What they did share, besides their profession, was the conviction that the

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* *Psychiatric Terror*, by Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway, Basic Books, 510 pp., $12.95.

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misdiagnoses had occurred and that they had to be condemned.

II

THE giant congress-eve welcome party on the Royal Hawaiian's vast lawn—torches, hulas, and mahimahi—stood in bizarre contrast to the struggle that would follow. It was Sunday evening, the congress would begin the next day, but it was still unclear how many votes there would be in all, how many would be allotted to each psychiatric society, and which delegate would be voting for that society.

The WPA, the caucus eventually discovered, was made up of 76 societies representing psychiatrists in almost as many countries. The exact number varied from year to year. In some countries, the profession is so fragmented along theoretical or ideological lines that several societies coexist. France, for example, has had, during the past seven years, at least seven; three of them quit the WPA between 1972 and 1976. Each society names a delegate to the WPA's General Assembly, and it is that delegate who has the right to cast his society's votes on the items placed on the congress agenda.

The number of votes each delegate may cast depends, first of all, on the number of paid-up members his or her society has. A society is granted one vote for each 100 members, up to a maximum of 30 votes. Most societies have fewer than 200 members, and so are entitled to only one or two votes. The large societies, with several thousand members, have the potential right to cast up to the maximum complement of 30. But if a society fails to pay its full assessment of WPA dues, its vote is cut proportionately. This makes little difference to the majority of the societies—those from Asia, Africa, and Latin America—since, in the main, they have only one or two votes to begin with; and, so long as they pay something, they keep at least one. The greatest effect is on the large societies. The American Psychiatric Association, with 18,800 members, had paid enough of a subsidy to the WPA to be accorded the maximum of 30 votes. The USSR's All-Union Society of Psychiatrists had paid much less; and so, although it also could have had 30 votes for its 21,000 members, it had only 23. Britain's Royal College of Psychiatrists, in its years of economic decline, could buy only 5 votes for its 4,450 members, despite its theoretical entitlement to the maximum, while Canada's smaller but richer society had 13.

That first night at the welcome party, the number of votes and the identities of the voting delegates were still not public. But some trends were already evident. It was clear that the Scandinavian delegates were planning to vote against the resolution condemning Soviet abuses. One of the caucus members, who had been active in the British campaign against Soviet psychiatry for half a dozen years, confronted Clarence Blomquist, a Swedish psychiatrist and professor of medical ethics:

"We don't like the Swedish position."

"We don't have a position."

"Your position is to vote against the Royal College resolution."

"We're concerned that the Soviets will withdraw. We're concerned about contacts in the long run."

"But they've pulled that on us for too long. By now there's just so much proof that they're abusing psychiatry."

"I'm not sure it's abuse. I think that those dissidents would have been declared ill in the West."

"What? In the West?"

"Yes, in Sweden."

"Well, not in the U.S.A., not in Great Britain, and not in Canada. And I'd certainly be surprised about Sweden."

Soviet lobbying, possibly more subtle, also made itself felt. The Israeli delegate, with one vote, was a candidate for the WPA's new executive committee, on the same slate with a Saudi and a Pakistani. Marat Vartanyan, a Soviet psychiatrist who held the post of associate secretary of the WPA, embraced the Israeli. "I'll vote for you!" he assured him.

It was easy to spot the Soviets. They wore suits. I wondered if it was true that all Soviet delegations traveling abroad were watched by the KGB. All I could see was that they always moved in twos.

III

IRONICALLY, the Sixth World Congress was devoted to the theme of psychiatric ethics. After a formal opening ceremony—which featured local politicians boosting island attractions, a Hebrew-speaking Christian minister praying for sunshine, and a high-school glee club offering a sacred paean to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel—the congress got down to business. A plenary session on the "Ethical Aspects of Psychiatry" became the first skirmish in the battle of Hawaii.

The centerpiece of the plenary session—in fact, of the congress—was the Declaration of Hawaii. That document, designed to set out the guidelines for the ethical practice of psychiatry, had been ushered through nine drafts by Clarence Blomquist, the same Swedish psychiatrist who had argued the night before that the Soviets should not be condemned. Although some countries, particularly developing and socialist ones, had reservations about it on the ground that it emphasized individual rather than social needs, it was, in the main, widely accepted. Its injunction against the compulsory hospitalization of persons without mental illness, and against the use of the profession for maltreatment of individuals or groups, should have been sufficient to eradicate political abuses. But it was not enforceable: there

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were no provisions for monitoring and investigation.

The audience seemed impatient with Blomquist's disquisition on the philosophical origins of his declaration. They seemed impatient with the plenary session's other speakers, too. Although the session was not focused on the Soviet issue—a special session would address that issue the following night—the absence of any discussion of it in that environment of watching and waiting seemed odd and annoying. In fact, the only statements that received any applause were elliptical references to the issue by the speakers representing West Germany and the United States.

And then came Eduard Babayan, the chief of the Soviet delegation. He would pull out all the stops at Wednesday's debate, but he used the Monday morning plenary session to map out his delegation's position. Soviet laws and procedures, he insisted, offered the psychiatric patient the greatest possible protection from diagnostic mistakes and arbitrary treatment. He insisted that anti-social behavior could never serve as sufficient grounds for hospitalization. He emphasized that no group of forensic psychiatrists, not even the staff at the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry, was more equal in the eyes of a Soviet court than any other group. He denied that the theories of any particular psychiatric school could possibly have any bearing on the finding of legal responsibility.

Each of these statements was an implicit refutation of major Western accusations: that dissidents were systematically misdiagnosed, that their only symptoms were their politically unacceptable views, that it was the Serbsky psychiatrists who would render a diagnosis of illness despite a previous diagnosis of health rendered elsewhere by more honest psychiatrists, and that the theories of the Snezhnevsky school of psychiatry were being used to justify political hospitalizations.

But Babayan did not step beyond implications. He made no mention of the condemnatory resolutions. He made no mention of the accusations themselves. He was only setting up the structure of the Soviet side's position. Soviet psychiatry functioned ethically, he said; reports to the contrary were only anti-Soviet agitation and slander.

Just as Babayan was speaking at Waikiki, his adversaries were agitating across town. The evening before, at the first meeting of the pro-condemnation caucus, Neil Abercrombie, a Hawaii state senator, had offered the state capitol for a press conference. The psychiatrists were afraid that such an extravaganza would rub the voting delegates the wrong way, but Abercrombie was impatient with their timidity. "I'm a politician," he admonished them. "You're holding this meeting to tell the world about the abuses. Who cares about a hundred psychiatrists? Who cares about the meeting if it's not reported?"

It was reported. At least, it got better coverage than Babayan. Leonid Plyushch, one of the formerly hospitalized Soviet dissidents, was there, together with two emigré Soviet psychiatrists and several members of the caucus. Among the press were two Soviet reporters.

Plyushch, a Ukrainian mathematician, had gotten into political trouble for the first time in 1968, when he was thirty, for a letter he wrote to a newspaper complaining about a political trial. He lost his job and eventually became a member of a dissident group. He was arrested in 1972 and accused of "especially dangerous crimes"—possessing copies of the underground *Chronicle of Current Events;* writing "anti-Soviet" literary criticism and showing it to others; belonging to an illegal organization; and signing open letters to the UN. He was sent for psychiatric examinations. At one, Georgi V. Morozov, the head of the Serbsky Institute, diagnosed him as suffering from "sluggish" schizophrenia. At a second, Andrei V. Snezhnevsky, the head of the Institute of Psychiatry of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, also considered him schizophrenic. Plyushch's trial was held without him. The psychiatrists recommended compulsory hospitalization in an ordinary psychiatric hospital, but the court insisted on a "special" prison hospital, one in which the lot of patients is much harsher and in which security is much greater. There he was given high doses of medication and suffered severe side effects.

Plyushch was finally released and deported early in 1976, primarily in response to protests by fellow mathematicians in the West. He was seen by a number of French, British, and American psychiatrists, including me; they could find no evidence of schizophrenia. Plyushch told his story at the Honolulu press conference and issued a plea that the WPA condemn Morozov and Snezhnevsky—both of whom were there in Hawaii as members of the Soviet delegation.

More accusations were made by the two emigré Soviet psychiatrists. One, Marina Voikhanskaya, told of her experiences with political "patients." Another, Boris Zoubok, described the mass hospitalizations that would take place during public events, such as Nixon's visit. Western psychiatrists used the occasion to warn that the American, British, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand psychiatric societies, as well as others in Western Europe, might quit the WPA if Soviet abuses were not condemned.

By Monday night, the close of the congress's first day, it was clear that the demand for condemnation would not be deflected, as it had been in Mexico City. It was also clear that the Soviets would fight.

IV

As it turned out, Tuesday belonged to the West. Indeed, by default. The scheduling of a special open session that night, in

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which statements could be made from the floor, guaranteed that. Set up in response to Western pressures, the session would feature a talk by an American psychiatrist who would air the accusations for the first time in an official meeting. The Soviets knew that and avoided it.

In fact, they seemed to avoid contact all day. The important ones, at least, were apparently planning strategy. Some voting delegates were afraid that Babayan was gearing up for a filibuster that would prevent them from voting on Item 11—the condemnatory resolution—at the second session on Wednesday. By evening, none of the Soviets could be seen. The special session was packed; except for the Soviets, almost all of the congress participants gave up the delights of Honolulu night life to attend it.

The main speaker was Paul Chodoff, a Washington psychiatrist. He presented the case for condemnation. Retaliation against dissidents, he insisted, should not be concealed behind the psychiatric fig leaf. "It is abhorrent," he said, "that people should be labeled insane solely because it suits the state for various reasons to handle them in this fashion, or because psychiatrists can be found to collaborate in this masquerade." He argued that the documentation of systematic, widespread abuse of Soviet psychiatry for political ends was convincing. If the WPA were to sidestep the issue by not voting condemnation Wednesday night, Chodoff warned, "it may survive, but it will have forfeited its moral vigor."

Following Chodoff, thirty psychiatrists lined up at microphones to add their voices. They overwhelmingly supported the resolution to condemn the Soviets.

Marina Voikhanskaya again told about the four cases of healthy dissidents she had seen in her own hospital in Leningrad. She also described the way colleagues she had known for years began to turn against her as soon as she started to question the diagnoses of hospitalized dissidents. Some of them even suspected *her* of mental illness. She singled out Snezhnevsky, Vartanyan, Morozov, and Nadzharov—all then in Honolulu—as having corrupted medical ethics, as having "blurred the borderline between police functions and medicine."

She told of an underground book by a Soviet dissident that had just reached the West. It contained a "white list" of some two hundred cases of dissidents in mental hospitals. It also contained a "black list" of the psychiatrists who put them there. "Who knows?" Voikhanskaya asked eerily. "You may well be sitting next to one of them at this moment."

Of course, she was wrong. They were not there. But the psychiatrists who were stood up in tribute as she returned to her seat. If that audience could have voted, it would have condemned the Soviets on the spot. But only the voting delegates could do that, and they would not cast their ballots until the General Assembly session the next night.

V

The congress participants were mainly from the U.S. and Western Europe, where feeling against the Soviets ran high. The voting delegates, on the other hand, represented societies around the world, and were sensitive to the political meanings of their votes. Many had come to Honolulu with instructions on how to cast them. Those who had not were not about to be overwhelmed by the passions of the Western majority that happened to be there. If on Tuesday they were exposed to the Western prosecution, on Wednesday they were offered the Soviet defense.

It was a defense built of denials, expressions of outrage, and intimations that the push for condemnation was nothing but a political hatchet job. The same strategy had been evident six years before in Mexico City. At the Fifth World Congress in 1971, Andrei Snezhnevsky, the foremost Soviet psychiatrist, had told Mexico City's *Excelsior* that the charges were "a maneuver of the cold war, carried out at the hands of experts." His message in Hawaii was much the same. Those charges, he told the *Honolulu Advertiser*, were just "a psychiatric variant of anti-Soviet propaganda." He again denied that abuses were occurring: "In mental hospitals, nobody is being detained for political or religious reasons." He also said that no more than about ten dissidents had ever been psychiatrically hospitalized, and insisted that all of them were ill. Some, he charged, had been rehospitalized after emigrating to the West. And, in any case, it was better for a dissident to be hospitalized than jailed, since the period of confinement is almost always shorter.

Snezhnevsky is a remarkable figure, a real Soviet man. He is a survivor. Born in 1904, he persevered through every stage of Soviet psychiatry. When it was ideologically necessary to reject genetics, he rejected genetics. When it became possible to resurrect it, he resurrected it. When Stalin demanded an attack on "anti-Pavlovians" in psychiatry, Snezhnevsky attacked them. When, after Stalin's death, Pavlovianism was forgotten, he forgot it. Through all that time, he methodically accumulated professional power. In 1932, at the uncommon age of twenty-eight, he became head of a psychiatric hospital near Moscow. In 1938, he was appointed deputy director of the important Gannushkin Institute. During the war, he ran a military hospital. In 1950, he was named chief of the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry. In 1951, possibly because of his participation in the official campaign against the "anti-Pavlovians"—many of whom also happened to be "cosmopolitans," which is to say, Jews—he was appointed to

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the chair in psychiatry at the prestigious Central Postgraduate Medical Institute. Finally, in 1962, he became a full member of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences—still the only psychiatrist to be so honored—and the head of the Academy's Institute of Psychiatry. On the way he gained some of his country's highest honors, including the Order of the Red Banner of Labor and the Order of Lenin. And, too, he gained control of Soviet psychiatry—its theory, its teaching, its research, its publication, and its professional activities.

Snezhnevsky's system of diagnosing schizophrenia has become the dominant one in the Soviet Union. And it is precisely that system which has been used to hospitalize dissidents, both by Snezhnevsky and by his colleagues. As it happens, I had studied that system for some years. In fact, by the time I arrived in Honolulu, I knew Snezhnevsky well, having spent days talking about him with former colleagues and students who had found their way to the West.

Snezhnevsky had always insisted that only psychiatrists could understand the complex nature of clinical diagnosis. Well, I was a psychiatrist, and one of the few in the West acquainted with his approach to diagnosis. Since the vote would be taken that night, and the opportunity would never come again, I called his room at the Holiday Inn. Yes, he would see me.

The translator, a serious young Russian on his first assignment abroad, apologized for not being acquainted with psychiatric terms. Snezhnevsky cheerfully agreed to my use of a tape recorder. I set it down in the middle of the table, next to his Gideon Bible. He would be happy, he said, to talk about anything, but would have to stop in an hour; his delegation had called a press conference that he was obliged to attend.

I wanted to get away from the realm of simple accusations and simple denials. After a long immersion in Snezhnevsky's system, I had questions I wanted to ask.

SNEZHNEVSKY sees schizophrenia as a lifelong condition. He defines three forms. The first, "continuous," is said to be characterized by a progressive, usually steady development, without any significant remissions. The second, "periodic," can be recognized by its attacks; but each attack is followed by a remission, during which the patient returns to mental health. The third form, "shift-like" or *"schub"* schizophrenia, is described as a cross between the other two. The shift-like schizophrenic has attacks followed by remissions, but in the remission after each attack, or shift, the patient is not quite as well as he had been before the shift. This third form, then, is characterized by attacks, like periodic schizophrenia; but its course, like that of continuous schizophrenia, leaves the patient progressively worse, even in between the attacks.

Over the years, Snezhnevsky and his students have elaborated on these three themes, describing several subtypes within each form and many syndromes within each subtype. Most important for the problem of dissident diagnoses is the fact that each of the three forms, particularly the continuous and the shift-like, is seen as representing a spectrum of clinical states, ranging from very mild to very severe. The mildest are typified by "symptoms" that merge into normality: social withdrawal, confrontations with parental and other authorities, philosophical concerns, and "reformism," which is to say, the wish to change society. These mild states would almost never be considered schizophrenic in the West; they would be called normal, or neurotic, or, if persistent, signs of a character disorder. Western forensic psychiatrists—those psychiatrists called by courts or lawyers to examine individuals accused of crimes in order to determine whether they should be considered responsible for their actions or not responsible on account of mental illness—would rarely declare such persons not responsible.

What the Snezhnevsky system has done has been to corral these mild states into the realm of schizophrenia. The mild states are simply the mild ends of one of the three schizophrenic spectra, with each spectrum, or form, considered a separate genetic illness, with variable degrees of clinical expression. So a person with a mild form of continuous schizophrenia—known as "sluggish" schizophrenia—is, according to the canons of the Snezhnevsky system, just as schizophrenic in the biological sense as is a person at the clinically more severe end of the same form, and is considered to have the illness, in active or inactive form, for the rest of his life. The same holds for persons at the mild end of the shift-like form. And so when Soviet forensic psychiatrists evaluate dissidents without classical schizophrenic symptoms (such as hallucinations and delusions) but with reformist tendencies and other characteristics that are sometimes seen in genuine schizophrenics, they can render a diagnosis of schizophrenia; and, on the theory that schizophrenics should not be held accountable for their actions, they can pronounce them legally non-responsible.

What happens when they do this is that the diagnosed dissident is put on trial, a trial that may be held without him because he is considered too sick to attend; the judges almost always accept the psychiatrists' diagnosis and finding of non-responsibility; and the dissident is sent not to a prison or labor camp but to a psychiatric hospital, usually of a "special," high-security type, one designed to hold the criminally insane.

According to Western critics, what is accomplished by all this is that dissenting views are pronounced the sick products of sick minds; dissidents are deprived of the opportunity to defend themselves at open trials; and, without being given

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definite sentences that end after, say, three to seven years, they are sent to hospitals until they are pronounced well, a judgment that may not be made until the KGB decides they are well. Finally, should they ever dissent again, that dissent may be considered a sign of the recurrence of their lifelong disease.

Snezhnevsky's system was not designed for dissidents alone. It has been used in hundreds of psychiatric hospitals and clinics on thousands of ordinary patients. It is just that its qualities make it possible for a dissident with mild personality quirks and with an insistent wish to reform society to be diagnosed as belonging within the schizophrenic fold, with all the legal and social liabilities that flow from that diagnosis.

GIVEN the Snezhnevsky system's variations and permutations, it is nearly impossible to question a diagnosis. But I decided to try. I asked Snezhnevsky about Plyushch. I reminded him that, according to his own writings, Plyushch should have residual signs of the illness, even in remission. But neither I nor several other Western psychiatrists, I said, had found any. Snezhnevsky generously forgave my simplicity. He pointed out that while it was usually true that residual signs of illness could be found, Plyushch had a variant of shift-like schizophrenia, in which the first few remissions are characterized by normal functioning. Soviet treatment had been successful; ultimately, however, Plyushch would become ill, and progressively deteriorate. "Being a psychiatrist," he told me, "you must know that there are long remissions and short ones. I don't exclude the possibility that Plyushch will have a very long remission. And then an attack and another attack. Nor do I know when they will come. They might come at any time."

I asked Snezhnevsky to describe Plyushch's symptoms, the ones that had made him render a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

Earlier, Snezhnevsky explained, Plyushch had had an attack, a shift, during which he had given up mathematics and had begun studying psychology and entertaining the idea that he had a mission. His second attack was characterized by ideas of abstract political philosophy which were anti-Soviet in nature and which led to his arrest when he tried to distribute them in written form to others in violation of the criminal code.

I asked if Plyushch had any symptoms that Western psychiatrists would have required for a diagnosis of schizophrenia, such as hearing voices or believing in plots that did not exist.

Snezhnevsky laughed. "Yes, those are the classical teaching cases," he said, the ones in textbooks. Plyushch and other mentally-ill dissidents did not have that kind of schizophrenia. Their symptoms were more subtle.

I told Snezhnevsky about Plyushch's own version of his history. He had explained his interest in psychology by saying that he had just been dismissed from his job as a result of his dissenting activities, and, out of work, spent his time trying to help his wife in research on the psychology of children's games. Both he and his wife felt that games could be devised that would help pre-school children mature in specific directions.

Snezhnevsky remembered the explanation and smiled in a way that suggested that I, too, could see that the notion was not a scientific theory but the preposterous obsession of a sick mind. I continued with Plyushch's explanation. Plyushch had pointed out that the idea was not his alone—that a famous Soviet psychologist by the name of Elkonin had similar notions. "And if I'm crazy," I quoted Plyushch as saying, "then so is Elkonin."

"Well, then, probably Elkonin is crazy!" Snezhnevsky burst into laughter.

I tried to generalize from the Plyushch case. Even if the dissidents *were* ill, they were obviously only mildly ill. Why were they pronounced in need of hospitalization? Why were they treated with drugs?

Snezhnvesky dismissed the questions. He countered that, really, we were dealing with the same tired list of ten or so cases; and that even those ten fared much better in hospitals than they would have fared in prisons or in labor camps. In the end, he said, despite a theoretical possibility of indefinite hospitalization, in practice their hospital stays were almost always shorter than their sentences would have been had they not been declared legally non-responsible. To my question about the use of special hospitals rather than ordinary ones—special hospitals being much more restrictive and harsh—he answered that under Soviet law, dissent was a serious, dangerous crime and that those who dissented were considered dangerous criminals. A sick murderer had to be kept in strict confinement, since escape would endanger society; the same obtained in the cases of sick political dissidents.

Much of the interview was spent jockeying around subtle psychiatric distinctions. Whenever I thought I had laid out reasonable grounds within his own system for a precise question, Snezhnevsky cited an exception or a complication. When I was able to point to a clear conflict between his assumptions about the validity of his theories and the results of more objective measures and studies, he did not acknowledge that a conflict existed.

Snezhnevsky looked at his watch. The press conference would start in half an hour. He had to get dressed. He seemed sorry that we could not go on. All my thrusts, however pointed and learned, had been parried.

SNEZHNEVSKY has developed his diagnostic system over a period of many years. He has, in addition, taught it to generations of psychiatric students,

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several of whom have told me that he believes in its validity. He really believes that there are persons with mild symptoms and personality eccentricities who can—and should—be considered schizophrenic. He has fought for that concept, his students have accepted it, and intelligent Soviet psychiatrists accept it too. One, who emigrated from Leningrad after working there as a forensic specialist, told me that, despite his rejection of things Soviet, he thinks the Snezhnevsky approach, at least in non-dissident cases, makes sense—that it is better than the approach that prevailed in Leningrad before Snezhnevsky's supplanted it in the mid-60's, and that it is even better than approaches used in the West. The World Health Organization has given enough credence to the system to allow its use in the recent International Pilot Study of Schizophrenia.

After talking with Snezhnevsky, and after considering what I know about him, I too tend to think that he does indeed believe in the scientific validity of his basic approach to psychiatric diagnosis. While he must have knowingly misdiagnosed some of the dissident cases he has seen—he is just too adept politically not to know what to do when asked by the KGB to examine a prominent case—he may also believe that others have actually met his criteria for schizophrenia and have required that diagnosis. And even if that is not the case with Snezhnevsky himself, it may well be the case in diagnoses of dissidents done by his students or by those influenced by his teachings.

If the Soviet private defense was played out in Snezhnevsky's hotel room, the public one was presented at the well-prepared press conference a short time later. The tone was very different. The big guns were all there. No subtleties were discussed. Dmitri Venediktov, the Deputy Minister of Health, ran it. He introduced Babayan, Snezhnevsky, and the rest of the Soviet psychiatrists, including Nadzharov and Morozov, the two who were, together with Snezhnevsky, most closely associated with the diagnosis of dissidents. Venediktov also introduced a Soviet priest, who happened to be touring Honolulu. (In 1975, during a similar press conference in Copenhagen, the Soviets had not only introduced a Soviet priest who "happened to be touring" Copenhagen, but a Soviet rabbi who was also on tour, equipped with a large *yarmulka*. Dissident sources later identified the "rabbi" as a Moscow engineer.)

Much of the press conference was devoted to an attack on *Psychiatric Terror*, the book by Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway, which contains a list of some 210 dissidents said to have been wrongly diagnosed. Babayan cited the case of someone he said was on the list who was obviously ill. Grigorenko, one of the famous cases, was, he said, also ill. So were all the others. Bloch, Venediktov added, was a "doubtful" psychiatrist. Reddaway, Snezhnevsky suggested, was just someone who was bitter about having been expelled from Moscow ten years before.

The conference was boring. As with all press conferences, the fact that questions could not be followed up in a substantive way made it a forum for the organizers. Besides, the press had no idea what to ask. The only significant question was a plant. The *Izvestia* correspondent stood up. Wasn't it curious, he asked, that the voting power of the various delegations was based on the payment of dues? He implied that the West, which had most of the votes, had in that way fixed the decision on the condemnatory resolution. That gave Venediktov the opportunity to agree and to criticize the organization of the congress and its rules on voting. The issue would become a lively one that night.

The hours between the press conference and the vote were dotted with meetings and countermeetings. A medical student of Ukrainian descent, an active pro-condemnation lobbyist, introduced me to someone he thought would be able to get through to the Brazilian delegate. At a cocktail party, I watched as two Soviet psychiatrists, Nadzharov and Zharikov, weaving through the throng, found themselves face to face with a former colleague, one who had been fired from their institute after applying to emigrate. Wordlessly, they executed a military right turn. In the Sheraton's lobby, Venediktov, who had just told the world that Sidney Bloch was a "doubtful" psychiatrist, brushed by him; neither knew who the other was.

VI

The General Assembly debate began with an objection from Babayan. The official Soviet delegate was bitter. The West had had six years to heap calumnies on Soviet psychiatry. Scurrilous literature had been stacked in the lobby for days. How could the WPA impose a half-hour time limit on the debate? How could the delegates vote without a sufficient chance to hear the Soviet side?

The American delegate argued against Babayan's motion for unlimited debate. So did the WPA's parliamentarian. And so did the WPA's own executive committee. The General Assembly voted 23-21 to limit debate.

Then, Item 10, the Declaration of Hawaii, came up. Babayan, anticipating Item 11, the one calling for condemnation of his society, was testy. He complained that the declaration assumed a confrontation between the doctor and the patient, with society on the side of the doctor. Doctor and patient were, he insisted, in league with each other. There was no need for patient advocacy. There was no need to question the allegiance of the doctor. For years the Soviets had been insisting

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that their laws did not call for judicial review of psychiatric commitments because the Soviet psychiatrist could not possibly have any reason to misdiagnose or mistreat a patient. But Babayan did not press his complaint. He would save his words for the next two agenda items. He agreed to the declaration, and it was passed unanimously.

The Australian-New Zealand delegate, John Grigor, explained his society's amendment to the British resolution, which, because it added to that resolution, took its place on the agenda. It called for condemnation of psychiatric abuse "in all countries in which they occur" and asked psychiatrists in those countries to "renounce and expunge those practices." It further asked "that the WPA implement this resolution in the first instance in reference to the extensive evidence of the systematic abuse of psychiatry for political purposes in the USSR."

Grigor had begun attending the regular meetings of the pro-condemnation caucus the day before, together with Peter Sainsbury, the British delegate. He was now sitting next to Babayan, who had scrawled JABBERWOCKY across his copy of the Declaration of Hawaii. Grigor told the General Assembly that psychiatrists had to look at themselves without fear. If they don't police themselves, he warned, others will. He urged that they vote for his society's resolution. It was strong and it had to be.

Babayan was sarcastic. "You speak about systematic abuse. I'd like you to present official materials . . . do you have any official data in addition to the materials presented in the lobby?"

Grigor explained that it had been difficult to visit the Soviet Union. Documentation of abuse had been collecting for years. Jack Weinberg, the American delegate, backed up Grigor. The documentation had come from Amnesty International and from psychiatrists who had left the Soviet Union.

Babayan was not satisfied. He referred to the documentation as "allegations." "It's not enough to say, 'we have voluminous materials.' " He wanted to see certificates by Western psychiatrists who had examined formerly hospitalized dissidents. In fact, the Western societies had not prepared well enough. Such signed certificates could have been assembled; several Western psychiatrists had examined dissidents who had been hospitalized and found them to be well. But no formal certificates had been prepared, and Babayan knew it. He continued to press the point. How could the General Assembly approve false and unsupported allegations? Did it know that several of the so-called dissidents had been hospitalized once they reached the West? That at least one had committed suicide? (He was right, in a few cases. Others he cited were not dissidents. The famous ones who had reached the West, however, had remained out of hospitals.)

Babayan pressed on. The charges against Soviet psychiatrists were slanderous. They do not, he insisted, use drugs as punishments. They use the same drugs used in the West. In fact, unlike the West—this, in an apparent allusion to emerging revelations about the CIA—the USSR had outlawed the use of LSD. Read *our* case histories, he urged. *Your* information is based on the testimony of sick patients and ignorant people.

Grigor bounced back with equal sarcasm. "If Dr. Babayan had been born in the West, he would have made an excellent Jesuit." He accused Babayan of shifting the issue by introducing the assumption that the dissidents were ill and concentrating on the irrelevant question of drug dosages. Babayan seemed hurt; he was, he complained, "insulted by being called a Jesuit."

The East German delegate warned that "serious consequences" would ensue if the resolution were carried. The Cuban delegate jumped up in a white heat. The accusations, he said, were monstrous, cowardly, and disgusting. Years before, he too had been accused of similar abuses. Now the Soviets were getting the same treatment. The Bulgarian delegate added his voice: "We consider these allegations as totally unfounded, tendentious, and malicious." The Swedish delegate suggested that the WPA was not the right place to air the issue.

THE momentum began to turn against the resolution, but time was on its side. The president of the WPA called for a vote. Babayan protested but the president refused to recognize him. The Soviet psychiatrist Vartanyan, present at the meeting in his capacity as associate secretary of the WPA, called for "justice." The president insisted on a vote. The Japanese delegate asked if he could abstain. The secretary-general said he could. One light-yellow ballot was passed to each delegate marked with the number of votes his society was empowered to cast. The ballots were filled in secretly and returned to the tellers. The secretary-general announced the results: total votes cast, 186; invalid (abstaining), 8; yes, 90; no, 88. The resolution was passed by two votes.

The narrowness of the victory was startling. Had the Poles shown up in Honolulu with their three votes, the decision would have gone the other way. Had the Soviet Union been prescient enough to pay its dues—actually, only $280 more—it would have had three more votes to cast.

In fact, the *delegates* were overwhelmingly against the resolution. Of the 55 casting ballots, 33 had said "no" and only 19 "yes," with three abstaining. Most of the delegates voting against, however, had only one or two votes. Since the balloting was secret, it would never be possible to be sure which countries had gone which way. The U.S., Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand had certainly supported the resolution. They ac-

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counted for 57 votes. Two of France's 9 votes were also affirmative. That made 59. Others in the yes column probably included West Germany (9), Israel (1) and, possibly, the Netherlands (8), Belgium (2), and Italy (6). On the negative side were the Eastern-bloc societies, almost surely the Scandinavians, and the vast bulk of Asians and Africans, most of whom had only one vote. Japan presumably abstained.

The next agenda item was the American resolution calling on the WPA to set up a committee to perform on-site investigations in cases of alleged abuse on the part of any WPA member society. Babayan fought on. Such a committee would be too expensive. It would be an illegal infringement on national sovereignty. It was obviously aimed at the Soviet Union. He again protested the use of weighted ballots. He turned to Grigor and complained, "This is all political." Grigor responded: "No, it's an issue of human rights." Apparently, the delegates agreed with Grigor. This time, given the chance to vote for future purity rather than present blame, they passed the American resolution by a greater margin, 121-66.

Babayan left the room, the press after him. He would not say whether or not his society would quit the WPA.

THE midnight victory party overflowed into the hall. Thirteen caucus members were there, three delegates, and, passing through, a half-dozen well-wishers.

Predictions abounded. Snezhnevsky, Nadzharov, and Morozov would be removed, or their future activities curtailed. Those Soviet psychiatrists who had maintained a low profile until then would rise: Kabanov, for example, a party man who had never diagnosed a single dissident. A shift away from Snezhnevsky's theories would take place. The Soviets would have to stop diagnosing dissidents. They would be unable to come to the follow-up conference on the Helsinki agreements in Belgrade claiming, as they had before, that everyone approves of their behavior. The WPA, through its actions in Hawaii, would regain the respect it lost in Mexico City.

A Ukrainian present announced that inmates of Soviet labor camps had been prepared to stage mass hunger strikes if the resolutions had not been passed. He circulated postcards addressed to one of those inmates, Semyon Gluzman, a young Kiev psychiatrist who had been arrested for writing an underground critique of a dissident's misdiagnosis. The celebrants stopped for a moment to pen him the news.

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Tiny Gorillas

A Story

Meredith Sue Willis

I NEVER met my husband's parents before we were married. They were living semi-retired in Florida, and he never seemed to go visit them. They started coming north for the summers, though, after Jeffie was born, and last year they bought the lake house. The idea of a family summer house has always been like a dream snapshot in my mind: the different generations gathered around something, an open fire or a picnic table, all singing together. Something different from my family. My mother is dead, but even when my parents were both alive and my sister and I were at home, the two of them never left their grocery store at the same time except to sleep. We never had vacations. So I loved this imaginary family vacation at the lake. The Blumes, Robert and me, Jeffie and Melissa.

But Robert only came up on weekends, and even when he was there he let his mother wash his socks and say anything she wanted and when I got him alone he said, "Oh, Mary Ann, you know you can't talk to my mother." Mrs. Blume would get up early and grab the kids' clothes and go to town and wash them, and if I cooked something while she was out, she refused to eat it because I put in too much salt or I undercooked the vegetables or I used a funny spice. Such as oregano. It wasn't until halfway through August that she let me know she hates oregano.

And all the time she was talking about her plans for Jeffie. She had met a woman in Florida who knew all about choosing Hebrew schools, and the best caterer for a Bar Mitzvah. Jeffie, mind you, had not even started kindergarten yet last summer. I would follow Robert down to the dock to be alone and whisper, "Robert, you know we always said they would choose their own religion, why aren't you stopping her?" And Robert winked and shrugged and grinned. "Don't worry, don't worry, you know you can't talk to my mother."

All summer I kept telling myself that she's like she is because of the terrible things she went through, and after all that suffering how terrible it must have seemed to her for Robert to marry me. I kept telling myself that, but it never really explained why she wouldn't eat a meatloaf I made from her own recipe. Or why she wanted me to feel like an orphan child Jeffie and Melissa brought home and blackmailed her into letting stay for lunch.

Lately, in my own home, which the Blumes have never visited, I've begun to imagine a conversation with her. Oh, Mrs. Blume, I say, I must tell you about a book I've been reading. I just learned that it is forbidden for little boys to be Bar Mitzvah whose mothers belong to certain evangelical Protestant sects. And oh, Mrs. Blume! There was a time when my sister Eva and I went to just about every little storefront church in Akron, Ohio. Eva was always trying to find the really true religion, or else she was in love with some religious boy. But the point is, Mrs. Blume, that I converted at one time or another to the Church of Christ, the Church of the Brethren, the Nazarenes, the Evangelical United Brethren, and I think the Pentecostals, at least we went to all their revivals one winter. If she says, you didn't read that in any book, I'll say, I know, I just wanted to give you a scare. But isn't it true that in Israel you don't count as Jewish if your mother isn't? Isn't that true?

I meant to call my sister the morning we left for the lake again because she is about to have a baby, but also just to hear her voice and maybe she would dispel the meanness from me. Oh, come on, Mary Ann, she would say, mother-in-law hate isn't real hate. You're going to have mountains and fresh air and if she won't let you do housework, fine, just play with your kids and enjoy the vacation. Don't you get low now, Mary Ann, you hear? But I had so many things to do to get ready that I didn't call. The kids and I were going up without Robert so he could have the weekend to put the finishing touches on his article for *Models* magazine. He worries me sometimes because he seems to pay more attention to his hobbies than to work. I didn't want to go up without him, either. I had wanted to tell Eva how unfair it was of Robert to send me up there alone.

The kids went with me down to the basement to get the suitcases. They laid their cheeks on the rim of Robert's big table and quietly looked at the

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miniature replica of the lake house where we'd be in a few hours. There is a dock and little boats and a tiny charcoal grill made out of the bowl of a spoon and there's a photograph of Jeffie and Melissa to scale in one of the bedroom windows. I asked Robert to put them down by the dock or in the woods instead of indoors, but he said I'd have to wait till he patented a home hologram projector.

I said, "How about if we spend the summer at Daddy's model instead of at the real lake?"

"I don't want to," said Melissa. "There's gorillas in the trees."

"Oh, Melissa, not in Daddy's trees. In the jungle maybe, but not in Daddy's model. You and Jeffie helped make the trees. Don't you remember the sawdust and paste and the little molds?"

"I remember," said Jeffie. "*I* sure didn't put any gorillas in there."

Melissa gently shoved the sailboat across the mirror lake where Robert had painted reflections of clouds and blue mountains. "Gorillas," she whispered. "Little tiny white gorillas go all over you. I don't care, I don't care, they have gorillas everywhere."

THE Blumes were waiting for us in the real pine trees under a gathering storm. We were forty-five minutes late and I wouldn't have been surprised to find out they had been standing there the whole time. I bounded out of the car apologizing: late start, kids wanted sandwiches at a roadside table, a porcupine waddling in a ditch. She didn't say a word, and didn't even kiss the kids till she had a suitcase under each arm and a shopping bag in her hands. Then she peered into the car again. "Where's Robert?"

My voice continued on, trickly and thin, trying to explain how wonderful about his article being accepted, how he needed to take more photos, change a few things to suit the editors.

"He could of told me he wasn't coming," said Mrs. Blume. Her accent always sounds as if she were making mean fun of English by pronouncing every letter just as it's spelled.

"Oh, he should have, he meant to—" What a coward Robert is, putting it all off by saying there's no use talking to her. She did something bitter with her mouth, and hoisted herself and her load of baggage into the house.

Mr. Blume kissed my cheek; I jumped. It's a phenomenon the way I forget about him. In my memory he always fades in the glare of her. Everyone was making a little disturbance: Mr. Blume's kiss, Melissa whispering she had to go potty, Jeffie calling for his grandpa to look at his new police gun and badge.

In the kitchen, Mrs. Blume had unpacked one of my shopping bags and laid out potatoes and dry cereal and canned goods on the table with a lot of space around each item. I said, "Now Mrs. Blume, this year I'm going to contribute more. I've already decided. And I brought the vacuum cleaner. I'm going to take my turn around the house."

Mrs. Blume is thin and she always wears dark slacks and long-sleeved, high-neck jerseys. Short hair, evenly iron gray with bangs, olive skin. When I first met her I was enthusiastic, I told Robert that she was dramatically good-looking. He said you get tired of black clothes. She said, "Who's going to eat all the lamb chops I bought?"

Mr. Blume winked furiously at me. "The babies will eat them, they're old enough to eat lamb chops. I bet they love lamb chops, hey, Mary Ann?"

"How can they eat lamb chops when she fed them peanut butter sandwiches at three o'clock?"

For half a second I thought, oh, did I really give them a snack on the road just to thwart her? And then on second thought I hoped my subconscious had actually done just that because she had no right to call me "she" to my face.

"I don't like to freeze chops," said Mrs. Blume. "I don't have freezer paper."

"Cook them," said Mr. Blume. "My God. How many is it?"

I said, "Let me go to town and buy some freezer paper. I should have called from town anyhow to see if we needed anything—"

"It isn't that many."

I stepped closer to her. "How many is it?"

"Not so many."

She turned away first, gave me her back. Her back is thin. My family has never been tall and we always tend to roundness except my mother the year she was very sick.

RAIN set in and the kids couldn't go out, so I set them up with crayons and paper on the kitchen table. I colored a little too, and Jeffie and Melissa argued about whether or not she could make a yellow ghost. After a while Mr. Blume wandered in and paced around the table a couple of times. I asked him to sit down and draw with us, and to my surprise he did, selecting all the shades of brown and using the crayon box for a straight edge. He drew a neat spindle-legged drop-leaf secretary. "See that?" he said. "That's an American design. I learned to do things more fancy. That's the way we did things."

I had never heard him talk about his cabinetmaking, never heard him talk about anything that went back before the war. Something screwed tight in me and I didn't know how to ask for more. Mrs. Blume came in with an armload of dishtowels for the kitchen drawer and complained about this rain and without Robert who would go up on the roof and sweep off the pine needles and squirrels' nests because even at this moment the drains might be backing up and causing terrible water damage. I said I would do it tomorrow

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morning, I'd like climbing up on the roof, it sounded exciting. We heard her feet as she went upstairs and passed briskly down the hall to the bathroom, a brief silence, and then she came back down the stairs heavily.

In the midst of us, causing Mr. Blume's neatly separated crayons to roll and mix with the others, she threw a gray cardboard cylinder. "Do you see that? Somebody didn't replace the toilet tissue."

Melissa was the culprit. I had sent her to the bathroom alone while I unpacked our clothes. "I'll run up with a new one," I said. "Let me take two so there won't be a chance of running out again—"

Her eyes widened as if I had frightened her. She snatched back the empty roll. "No extras. We have to think ahead and conserve."

"Now Emma," said Mr. Blume softly, coloring in a leg of his desk.

Her hands began to shake and tear apart the toilet-paper roll. "Last year it was the same, they wasted."

I said, "We all waste paper, think of the trees!"

"Little girls use more than their share."

"Now Emma," said Mr. Blume.

I was aware of an attack being made on one of my children, but I froze, I always freeze instead of protecting the way a mother should. Meanwhile Melissa drew a long sunstorm of a yellow limb on her ghost. Jeffie said, "I'll use some less, Grandma. Melissa's just little."

Bless his heart for recalling me to life. "Come on, Jeffie, let's go upstairs. Bring your picture, Melissa. We have something to do."

She kept the upstairs like a barracks—narrow, ugly corridor with board floors and board walls and you could hear them pacing at night. But I had a plan this year. I had been collecting posters and I'd brought a hammer and tacks. We nailed the crayon ghosts and spaceships and Mr. Blume's American drop-leaf secretary on the outside of the doors so there would be no mistaking what the pounding was all about.

She came up, but not screaming as I'd expected. She passed us without a word, staggering with one of her headaches and went to bed. We stopped hammering then and waited and waited for her to come down for dinner, and finally I made tomato soup and grilled-cheese sandwiches and afterward Mr. Blume took us to town for ice cream. We talked about how to recognize well-built furniture. "You can pay a lot of money for good stuff," he said, "but you can also pay a lot for crap. Emma got us into the antique business; she thought it would be good, I could refinish things. She did everything, planned everything, thought everything through. I just let Emma do it all, and she even figured out that only antiques would make me happy because all the other furniture is such *drek*. I do special jobs for people now," he said, waving a hand carelessly. "You know. Some old lady comes and wants a piece of furniture like used to be in her father's house and we go through the books and find what she wants and I make it. The best materials, I take my time. I never hurry, and it costs them plenty. What would you like me to make for you? A table? I'll make the girl a beautiful doll house. How about soldiers for the boy?"

"How about a space port?" said Jeffie.

I said, "Did you make toys for Robert when he was little?"

Mr. Blume's forehead became perplexed and his jaw lost its boastfulness. "You know, I don't remember. I don't remember lots of things. I suppose I did."

"It's just that he likes miniatures so much, I thought he must have learned it from you."

"I think I made him toys," said Mr. Blume. "Some soldiers. A truck."

JEFFIE woke me the next morning. "Melissa didn't have a nightmare," he said, walking to the window. There was nothing to see outside but a white fog. It gave me a feeling that I was dreaming and Jeffie was part of the dream because he was so quiet and grave. "Grandma's in our room fixing the bed."

Melissa ran in, barefoot and giggling, tripping on her flowery flannel nightgown. "Jeffie peed the bed," she sang, "Jeffie peed the bed!"

"Oh, Jeffie, you didn't!"

He looked out the window. "Grandma's fixing the bed."

I ran across the hall wondering how she knew. Had she been stalking the halls all night so she sensed it as soon as it happened? She was in triumph, wearing her one colorful garment, a tailored pendleton plaid robe. She cracked the fresh sheet in the air and let it settle at its own speed on Jeffie's bed. Almost pleasantly she said, "If you let little boys have juice before they go to bed, it's going to happen. It was the same with Robert until I stopped giving juice before bed."

"I'll take the sheets to town."

She snatched up the mound of dirty sheets. "Just don't feed him juice any more, that's all."

"He doesn't do it at home and he gets juice." She shrugged. I said, "Why do you suppose he only does it up here?"

"Maybe you don't remember when he does it."

"I remember exactly when he did it last. It was up here last summer."

"Maybe it's cold up here."

Jeffie and Melissa had come as far as the doorway. They always get quiet when the adults begin to contend among themselves, but they watch. Part of me was saying, yes, see this, children, watch how I protect you. I had a whole winter's worth of passionate speeches to make to her. "No," I said, "Jeffie does it because he's afraid to get up and go to the bathroom. He's afraid to go all the way down that long dark hall. The bath-

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room door doesn't even close. He's so frightened he doesn't wake up."

She rolled her eyes at me, but said nothing. Hurried out, in fact, with the load of sheets. I had thought she would fight. When she was gone, I made them take off their nightclothes. They had been quiet long enough now and began to play naked, jumping up and down on the beds, especially Jeffie who had to blast away the memory of his humiliation. He used his jeans for a cape and shouted that he was able to leap tall buildings at a single bound.

Then suddenly she filled the doorway again and I had a sick feeling of having miscalculated. Of course, I thought, it's her house. She can go out and come back just as she pleases. I thought I'd gotten away with something and here she was again.

"They're going to catch cold with no clothes on."

"They're playing. They don't get cold when they're playing."

"Melissa is blue." She grabbed the nearest bedspread and wrapped it around Melissa a few times like a mummy and said to Jeffie, "Put your pants on!"

"I'm superman, Grandma."

My body felt bound like Melissa's. I said, "Don't you dare try to dress my children in front of me."

"Where's Jeffie's shirt? Feel his arm, he's shivering."

I kept thinking, If it was my house instead of her house this would not be happening. Why do I always have to fight her at her house? Melissa started to cry. It was coming to me what to do. "Stop crying, Melissa, put your clothes on, Jeffie. We're going for a hike."

"In the rain?" said Mrs. Blume.

"Before breakfast?" said Jeffie.

"Yes. We're taking a picnic breakfast."

She said, "I'm making them a hot breakfast."

I said, "They're not eating it. I'm taking them for a hike and a picnic breakfast." And all the while thinking what I would tell Robert: No, Robert, we cannot stay here where this woman springs at my children out of the woodwork. She hides everywhere and there is no escaping her maliciousness.

WEARING slickers and carrying raisin bread and cheddar cheese in a plastic bag we climbed into the rowboat and squeaked and splashed out into the white fog. Only the tallest, nearest trees were visible like sheetmetal cutouts along the shore and the children were thrilled into silence. I didn't row far, only a couple of hundred yards to a little wooded area with a beach and no house. We pulled the rowboat up there and went walking. We saw two kinds of toadstools, yellow-orange and cream-rose, on a long fallen tree trunk. We saw some asters, a book of matches, a beer-can ring, and a toad that thumped through the wet leaves and we chased him. Then we came back and sat on the log, making sure no one touched the toadstools or ate our raisin bread. Since everything seemed upside down anyhow, I told them a good-morning story of Hansel and Gretel and Jeffie leaned against my shoulder and Melissa leaned on him. The sun began to come out and we were hot in our slickers as we started back in the boat. Melissa got whiney, and when he thought I wasn't looking, Jeffie shoved her with his foot and she kicked him and made a face like her grandmother's and he kicked her back, and I told him to be good, he was bigger than she was, and I was bigger than both of them, so watch out. Jeffie said if he was Hansel he would have left her in the woods.

"Stop it, please. Grandma and Grandpa are going to think we didn't have a nice time."

"But we didn't get any breakfast."

Melissa said, "I want hot breakfast."

I could have smacked them both; I could see they were more than eager to betray me. "I'll feed you," I said. "But neither one of you had better say a word. Now take off the slickers."

Melissa whispered that she wanted an egg.

Mrs. Blume was waiting in the kitchen, arms folded over her chest. I got out the milk and cereal. I had an idea of not speaking to her again the whole summer. She said, "Did you go rowing in all that fog with the babies? What if a motorboat came?"

"There are no motorboats. No one is up yet for the summer and besides I hardly left the shore."

"You didn't put life jackets on them."

"Did you really go down to the dock and check on me?"

"Mr. Blume went out. He is still out looking for you down the shore. With his cough."

Melissa came in. "I want an egg."

Mrs. Blume opened the oven and displayed two warm dry plates of toast and scrambled eggs. She put them on the table, warning the kids not to burn themselves. I had to decide if I were too proud to reheat the coffee she'd made. I decided I needed coffee, so I sat down with a cup of the reheated and a piece of raisin bread.

Jeffie said he wasn't hungry and I could eat his eggs. I said no thanks and chewed raisin bread. Mrs. Blume stood at the sink with her arms crossed watching us eat. I wondered if Robert learned his great talent for concentrating and shutting things out by eating under her eyes. The kids ate as fast as they could, and when they were gone she started to clean up. I said, "I'll do it just as soon as I finish this coffee." She took away the napkin where I had laid the raisin bread. I took hold of my coffee mug with both hands and I was so angry I didn't hear at first what she said from the sink.

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"I called Robert. He's coming up."

"Now? This morning?"

"He's taking the bus and he's on his way right now."

"What on earth did you say to him to make him come?"

"I told him you took the children with no life preservers out on the lake in the fog. It's too late to stop him now, he's on his way."

Unfairness overwhelmed me, and a panic this time to save myself. My rational mind told me that if Robert were coming it was not that he believed her but that it had been easier for him to do what she wanted. But my stomach felt shocked and punished.

I took a deep breath and said, "Well, maybe then Robert can help get ready for the guests."

"What guests?"

"Didn't I mention it before? Oh, I should have told you, it isn't fair to spring it on you. Still, I didn't want you to make any special preparations."

"What guests?"

"Why, my sister Eva and her husband. You must have heard me mention them. At least I think this is the husband I know. Eva changes husbands almost as often as she changes churches, but for the time being she's always sure she's got the right one—"

"When are they coming?"

"Oh, I don't know for sure. You never know with Eva. We'll have a great time once she gets here, though. She'll keep the place hopping. Arguments, jokes, hymn singing. The most fun is when she starts in on converting people to her religion. If you don't agree with her right off she'll quote Scripture and get out her Bible and make you read selected passages—"

I could hear it in my mind, I really could, how Eva would handle Mrs. Blume. Eva would never feel sick at her stomach or paralyzed. Eva would zero in on her, wait until, say, she started complaining about something, the cheap construction in Florida, the service on the airlines, and the Amtrak is even worse. Or polyester fibers! Eva would start in sweetly: Does polyester itch you, Mrs. Blume? Does it give you a rash? Is that so, does the rash spread? Maybe it isn't the fabric but poison ivy. Or your nerves. You know, I bet it's your nerves, Mrs. Blume, you seem like a real nervous type.

Mr. Blume came in from his walk with his cheeks pink and his thin hair fluffed by the wind. Looking healthy and not coughing. As soon as she saw him, Mrs. Blume grabbed her temples between her hands and ran for the stairs, snapping as she passed him, "Ask her! Ask her who is coming up here and she didn't say a word to me!"

I could give her a headache and send her to bed every day by lunchtime, I thought, watching her go. Just think of it. Mr. Blume hesitated on the bottom stair, about to follow her. I was pretty sure he was looking up the stairs with dread.

"She got so upset at the idea that my sister might come for a visit—it couldn't be for a long time anyhow because she's just about to have a baby. She called Robert and convinced him to come up here on the bus."

"Oh my God."

I was completely sure that he didn't want to go up and spend forty-five minutes cooling down washcloths for her head. I called after him, "Mr. Blume, when she goes to sleep, come out and go for a swim with us."

THE sky stayed hazy damp even after the sun came out, and I lay on the lounge chair sweating and kept an eye on Jeffie and Melissa as they played in the water. For a while they would call, "Hey, Mommy, watch this," but I was so lethargic that they finally ignored me. I had a feeling I was at a crossroads of some sort; I should get up and swim laps or climb on the roof and sweep off the old leaves or bake a cake for Robert or do needlepoint, or else I was going to melt into this lounge chair. At the same time, though, I needed to lie here and recuperate. This year I was the one downstairs and Mrs. Blume had fled to the bedroom. I was in possession of the battlefield, so to speak, but I still felt exhausted and wounded, as if my triumphant meanness had cut two ways. And since I was the apparent winner, nobody was going to feel sorry for me. Mr. Blume and Robert would hover around her and make her tea and hang all those damp headache washcloths on all the racks in the bathroom. I wasn't convinced I had really won, either. Maybe she was not at full strength, I thought. Maybe she was declining with a hidden cancer. She had the trembling hands, the headaches.

Mr. Blume came out and began to sand the bottom of the sailboat. I watched him from my place on the dock and he seemed sadly far away. I should get up and go help him, I thought. But I just kept on watching and after a while it seemed there was something odd about his appearance, and I realized that he had on a short-sleeved shirt, something from Florida with pineapples or palm trees. I had never before seen either one of them in short sleeves. Always a jacket, full sleeves, a cardigan.

He started down the steps: I held my breath, was he going to forget just this one time? Then he paused on the steps and reached up into the sleeves and pulled some old-fashioned country cotton underwear down over his arms.

When he sat down near me on the bottom step, I said, "Is that really long underwear?"

He laughed with his head a little to one side, a sort of headshrug, a joke on himself. "Yah. Long underwear. It's cold blood. I never get warm

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enough. It seems like we got cold during the war and never did get warm."

"How about Florida?"

"Florida's nice, but they don't insulate the houses there—you should hear what Emma has to say about that—" He laughed again, gave me a quick look, maybe apologetic for bringing her up. He looked again at my bathing suit. "*You* must have warm blood."

"It isn't a real bikini, it's got these strings on the side so you can gather up the bottom and make it smaller, but I'm always embarrassed."

"You wear it how you want," he said. "Don't worry about what people say. You won't hear me complaining."

Well, I thought. Well, well. I almost told him I thought he was a nice-looking man, too, but he seemed to think of something and let his shoulders stoop as he sat and rubbed his hands over his face and forehead.

"You know, Mary Ann, she never was an easy woman. Not even before the war. She was never easy, but she did everything to make it easy for me. Everything."

"I know. Robert told me."

"Compared to her, I take things easy. She complains a lot, but that's just noise. She hides the real things that bother her. You have to be a detective, you know? A regular detective to find out what's inside her."

I closed my eyes against the greasy sun. Please don't tell me to feel sorry for her, I thought. I am too mean now, you'll just be wasting your energy. "Is she sick, Mr. Blume?" My ears were prepared for the shape of the words, tumor, chemotherapy, breast removed.

"Just the scaling. You know, psoriasis, and the headaches and no sleeping. That's nothing new. The funny thing is that I don't have it so much any more. That's what I mean, it's like I relaxed and got better over the years. I started out, I used to burst out crying, wake up screaming. I was a mess, a disaster, let me tell you. But little by little I relax, and she—she almost seems to be getting worse. It's the funniest thing, like she did too good to start with. Well, each person is different, isn't that right?"

I wanted to say, then why don't you let anyone see your arm? The phone started ringing, and I ran to get it.

She just barely beat me to it. Wrapped in her robe, one hand pressing her forehead, she said hello, then waited a few seconds and said, "Where are you?" From her voice I knew it was Robert. "They're here, they're back. They're down swimming. She's right here. Do you want us to pick you up in town?" And then there was a long silence, and I thought I knew what was going on, that Robert too can get his own way in his own way. "So!" she said, jerking her head and the phone apart and handing it to me. "He didn't come." She put her hands together inside the sleeves of the robe and went upstairs like a monk.

Robert was not coming. He said he'd sat down just to make one little adjustment on the model, and he got so involved he lost track of time and missed the bus. He would come on Wednesday the way we planned. He asked me what really happened, and I said, "Nothing." Yes, he said, he knew all along it was his mother's craziness.

Just the same, when I had hung up, I was angry with Robert instead of Mrs. Blume. Mrs. Blume had not raised anyone's hopes and then dashed them.

SHE came down for supper, after we were already at the table, wearing a black skirt. Without asking if she wanted any, I dished her out some creamed canned chicken and bisquick dumplings, real Midwestern church fellowship night stuff. Ohio supper. Mr. Blume beamed and served her a lot of jello salad and actually stood behind her chair like a waiter and asked if he could get her anything else, all the while complimenting my cooking lavishly. Sometimes he seems too alien and European to me, not a real American man like my father who never noticed food or clothes or much of anything but the business and baseball. Robert had become more American too—less exotic—over the years I'd known him. Mrs. Blume finished off her serving of jello before anyone else and helped herself to more. She ate the main course too without any criticism. I said, "I should have made the chops, but I was afraid of ruining them. I've never been good at simple things like broiling."

Mr. Blume said, "We'll have them tomorrow. Another day won't hurt them. That's a cold refrigerator, I put a thermometer in it once."

Mrs. Blume looked out the window as if she couldn't be bothered and kept eating.

"Tomorrow we're having fish," said Jeffie. "I'm going to go fishing."

I said, "Oh, Jeffie, you never eat fish."

"I'll eat those fish."

"That's right," said Mr. Blume, "fish you catch yourself taste special."

Jeffie said, "These fish taste like hot dogs!" We all laughed at him, except her, and even she seemed recalled from her reverie of small, quick chewing to look at Jeffie. Jeffie was so pleased at the response that he said, "These fish taste like hot dogs with mustard!"

"Yah," said Mr. Blume, "I caught some sea bass fish once in Florida and Emma deep fried them—dipped first with just the littlest bit of meal. They were so sweet, those bass."

"And lemon," said Mrs. Blume. "I laid the lemon slices in the pan too."

Melissa had been listening politely, turning her head to each speaker, but she suddenly started to giggle and shouted, "Candy fish!"

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Oh no, I thought. Jeffie and Melissa's humor when they get started always ends up with something spilled or broken.

"Ice-cream fish!" said Jeffie. "Coca-Cola fish!"

"Gorilla fish!"

Jeffie really liked that one and started slipping down in his chair and shouting one after another: "Monster fish! King Kong fish! Dracula fish!"

Mr. Blume rolled his eyes. "Look at my silly grandchildren."

"Grandpa fish!" shouted Jeffie.

"Grandma fish!"

"Doo-doo fish!"

"Okay Jeffie," I said, "That's really it. Enough."

Melissa retaliated with one ultimate joke and pushed a clot of chewed dumpling out onto her lower lip and Jeffie choked on his milk and spewed it on his plate. Melissa let the food clot drop. It rolled off her chin and onto the floor.

I was utterly humiliated; I particularly can't stand the spit-out food. Eva, when she used to get really mad at me, would stick out her tongue covered with something disgusting and half-chewed and I would scream that I had to throw up and run to the bathroom and stick my finger down my throat, unsuccessfully. I grabbed a napkin in one hand and Melissa by the back of the neck in the other and simultaneously pulled her up in her chair and started to clean up, her mouth first, forcefully, and then the floor. Jeffie sobered up immediately and wiped his own face. Melissa whimpered and whined. "Don't," I said, "Just don't you dare." I realized then that they were all solemnly staring at me, and I reviewed what I had just done: had I been rough? Mr. Blume's eyes were enormous and his mouth looked like it might pucker and cry, but Mrs. Blume was staring off into space again. I said, "I don't mind when they talk silly, but I won't have doo-doo talk at the table and I can't stand food spitting."

Mr. Blume said, "Melissa's such a little girl."

Mrs. Blume said, "He was always too easy on Robert too."

AFTER the kids were in bed I spent most of the evening watching Mrs. Blume from over the edge of a magazine. I was trying to figure out something by staring at her. The skirt bothered me; I had always seen her in slacks. The family never dressed up or went anywhere, and she didn't seem to have shorts. But there were those legs, slim ankles, high-set muscular calves, hairless, no bruises or scars or veins. Why had I never seen her legs before? Why anything with the Blumes? I was tired of both of them, I thought, and went to bed where I wouldn't see them, but had trouble falling asleep.

I finally did sleep, and deeply enough so that I didn't hear the phone ring. The first thing I knew was when a horror was incorporated into my dream that seemed unfairly real, and I could feel myself coming nearer to waking up and I didn't want to. When I was awake, I was sure there was someone in the bedroom with me. "Who is it?"

"I don't know," said the voice. "It's long distance."

It was Mrs. Blume, I could make out the shape of her shoulder, her hair bound up. Was she wearing curlers?

"Aren't you going to get up? They're paying for long distance."

"There's a telephone call for me? I didn't hear it ring." She stepped aside in the dark to let me pass. There are never any lights in this place, I thought, how can she pace the hall the way she does with no lights?

Like a bolt of lightning out of the darkness came my sister Eva's voice in the phone. "Mary Ann, Mary Ann! What took you so long? Who was that, your mother-in-law? What's the matter with you, are you still asleep? Well, wake up and listen. I just had Evan. Exactly forty-five minutes ago."

"Evan?"

"The new baby, dum-dum. Don't you get it? I just delivered and his name is Evan and he's a wonderful little guy with a great big old globe head and red hair. A whole lot of red hair. He lay on my stomach and looked me straight in the eye and I played with his hair. I never felt better in my life, Mary Ann. You've got to have your next one natural. It was the best experience in my whole life."

I finally got it all straight, that she was alone in her hospital room and yes, she had just delivered, and the only thing in the whole world that was wrong was that they had taken Evan away when she and he were both wide awake and enjoying themselves.

"You know," she said, "There weren't even stitches. No drugs, no stitches, and no pain. It was a job of work and a joy. After I call up everybody I know and tell them, I'm going to sneak out of here and spend the night with Evan. He's lying in there awake too, wondering what on earth it's all about, we started out so cozy and happy and now he's isolated out there in the assembly line."

"Listen, Eva, I'm coming out there to take care of you."

"Oh, please come, but be prepared, I'm not going to need taking care of. Bring the kids, because as soon as they meet Evan they'll talk you into having another one, natural this time—"

"I'm coming out there with or without them because I have to come. I have to get away from here. They're turning me mean, Eva, Robert's mother is turning me mean. I'm making up nasty stories to hurt her and I don't have any sympathy—"

"Does she deserve it?"

"No."

"Well then don't worry about it. When are you coming? Not that it matters, but let me know. I'm going to go kidnap Evan now."

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"Don't get in trouble."

"What can they do? They've already put me in solitary."

I sat a few minutes in the dark, thinking Eva, oh Eva, I wish I were Evan and you were my mother and you were going to sneak in and kidnap me from all the little monstrous unknown things all around. I had to go to Eva, although she would be busy mothering the new baby and wouldn't mother me. But if I didn't go, I would never get through this whole summer with Mrs. Blume. Well, I thought, Eva will be my treat. I said, "Why don't they ever leave a goddam light on in this house? So damn cheap!" I found the lamp by the stairs, and clicked it on—and found myself face to face with Mrs. Blume who was sitting on a step taking curlers out of her hair and laying them in her lap.

"You've been listening to me?" I couldn't remember how much I had said aloud, the darkness had been like an extension of my head. "You sneaked down here and listened to me?"

"You're going away."

"Don't worry, I won't leave the kids with you. My sister just had her third baby forty-five minutes ago by natural childbirth and it's a boy named Evan."

"Which sister?"

"I only have one sister. Couldn't you at least pretend you're interested enough in me to know how many sisters I have? I have one sister and one father and a mother who's dead. If you're dishonest enough to sneak down and listen to my private phone conversation you could be dishonest enough to pretend you know how many sisters I have."

"I know who your sister is. She's the religious fanatic. The anti-Semite."

Well, I thought, now I won't ever have to feel guilty again. Now I can pack up and take the kids and when we've visited Eva we'll go home from there and never come near this woman again unless she deigns to visit me in my house. No more cottage cheese and dried up scrambled egg curds. I even hoped she would add something so awful now that I would be forced to wake up the children and run out on her tonight.

But instead of saying anything else, she turned her face away from me.

I said, "You don't know my sister and I hope you never have the privilege. You can't see anything outside your own head anyhow. You're a bitter sick old woman."

She started to get up, but the old-fashioned pink rubber curlers slid out of her lap and awkwardly she had to sit back down again and gather them up.

It occurred to me that she did not want me to run out tonight, that she was trying to get away before she said some nastiness. I said, "And another thing, Mrs. Blume, no one has told you and I've been waiting a year for Robert to do it but he's afraid to. Our children are going to choose their own religion. You aren't going to choose it for them, not even for Jeffie."

HER mouth got smaller and some more curlers dropped. I think her hands were shaking. There was a sound upstairs: Mr. Blume in pajamas and robe, crouching over a little to get a good look at us, grinning. "Hey! Who's giving a party? What are you girls doing?" But he came down slowly as if he weren't sure he wanted to.

"My sister had a baby," I said.

"*Mazel tov*; a boy or a girl?"

"Her sister the anti-Semite," said Mrs. Blume.

"Ah, Emma." He sat down on the step beside her. "Didn't we have enough of anti-Semites already?" He gave me a big wink. "You understand, Mary Ann. She doesn't feel well." Appealing to my sweet reason.

I said, "Why? Why do I have to understand? You and Robert both are always telling me to understand her and no one has ever explained why."

"Ah, Mary Ann," he made a tiny hurt headshake, winking and winking. "Let's all go to bed now. Be a sweet girl, Mary Ann. I know you're a sweet girl."

"I'm not. That's my secret. I'm as mean as she is only they raised me up to hide it—"

Mrs. Blume stopped fiddling with the curlers and twisted her head up and back so she could look down at me. I thought, there, you see, the deception. She isn't gray and old at all. Her cheeks were brilliant and her eyes and her teeth. She said, "She wants the details, that's what she means. Do you remember when we first came over here, the little girl reporter who wanted to know everything? This one wants to know the details too. This one wants to know what everything was like that happened—"

"I am not This One I am Mary Ann Blume."

"No, Emma, Mary Ann's a nice girl—"

Mrs. Blume pointed at me. "She wants to know things, and then she'll say, oh she's so sorry, oh she's so sympathetic."

"No she doesn't, Emma."

Yes she does, I thought. I had not realized it myself, and it wasn't exactly what she was saying, but there was something I wanted from them.

Mr. Blume shrugged. He was getting tired of all this. He said, "Well, Mary Ann, you understand it's something a person can never tell to another one—"

Mrs. Blume said, "And even if you could tell it, I wouldn't tell it, not to her. Not to someone who doesn't have the right to know."

I thought I had the connection now, but I wasn't going to say this to the Blumes, not to Mrs. Blume, and not to Mr. Blume, placating and winking and saying, "Someday I'll tell you about it, Mary Ann."

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"No you won't," said Mrs. Blume. "Because no matter how much you tell her she still won't know nothing."

I thought I wasn't going to speak, but lately I had all these words that passed out of my mouth easily and I said, "My mother was dying of cancer and they kept it from us, from me and Eva. She was sick for a long time, dying for two years and no one told us, we had to guess. My parents had their awful little treasure of a secret too and it was the most painful thing I ever had happen to me because it went on so long."

"It isn't the same," Mrs. Blume snapped.

"No, they only held it in a couple of years, not thirty. And she died of it in the end."

We all looked in different directions for a little while and Mr. Blume patted Mrs. Blume's back. "Well, Emma. Well, Mary Ann."

Mrs. Blume said, "She's going to Ohio to be with her sister the religious fanatic and she's taking the babies with her."

"Not for long, Mary Ann?"

"I don't know yet."

At that moment there was running upstairs and Jeffie yelling for me. "Mommy, Mommy, Melissa's got another gorilla nightmare!"

I ran upstairs, almost stepping on the Blumes and they came right behind me, but stopped at the children's door.

Melissa was sitting up with her covers smoothed and her hands folded as if she were about to recite. I said, "Are you scared?"

"I had a nightmare," she said.

"Do you want Grandma and Grandpa to come in and hear it too?"

She nodded, and I beckoned to the Blumes and we all stood around her bed while she told us the dream.

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Performing the "Ring"

Samuel Lipman

WHAT are we to do about Richard Wagner? Nothing in the years since his death in 1883 has succeeded in mitigating the essential unpleasantness of his personality. Indeed, few men in the history of art can have been so unfortunate in so many of their admirers; few can have had a world outlook of such unparalleled evil erected in the image of their ideas of art and life. Whatever else Wagner was, the Nazis found a hero in him. And whatever else he was, this worshipper of power wherever he found it remains one of the famous anti-Semites of history.

It thus might have been thought that Wagner—man and artist alike—would have forever lain entombed in the ruins of Hitler's Valhalla. But on the contrary, admiration for Wagner's art, which even during the darkest days of World War II had not been completely extinguished among Germany's Western enemies, began a steady rise after 1945. The first sign of this popularity was the worldwide interest in the reopening of the Bayreuth Festival in 1951, devoted as always to the performance of Wagner's ten major operas. The 1951 festival, which featured a revolutionary staging by the composer's grandson, Wieland Wagner, of both *Parsifal* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, has now been folowed by the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the festival in 1876. Since Bayreuth was established as a stage for the presentation of the *Ring*, it is only fitting that the centennial season should have presented still another controversial production of that cycle, this time by the young French director, Patrice Chéreau.

Apart from the vast number of performances of his music the world over in recent years, the publishing industry has also been busy supply the Wagner market. At long last, Ernest Newman's classic biography has been reprinted, and in paperback.[1] In the last two years, Hans Gal's short biography has appeared in English translation,[2] and we now have, *inter alia*, a small picture book by the Verdi specialist Charles Osborne,[3] a consideration of the tangled relationship between Wagner and Nietzsche by the singer Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau,[4] and a detailed examination of Wagner's compositional sketches for the *Ring* by Curt von Westernhagen.[5] Two large-format volumes have also been produced for the gift trade, one a collection of documents and illustrations,[6] and the other a history of the Bayreuth Festival by Hans Mayer.[7]

Since the treatment of Wagner's life is naturally marked by perplexity that such greatness could have been produced by so tarnished an instrument, it is not surprising that much of the major concentration in this Wagner "boom" should be on the works themselves, and in particular, given their greater excellence, on the operas of Wagner's maturity: *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), *Die Meistersinger* (1868), *Parsifal* (1882), and the four parts of the *Ring—Das Rheingold* (1869), *Die Walküre* (1870), *Siegfried* (1876), and *Götterdämmerung* (1876). And of these, it is the *Ring* which has attracted the greatest amount of intellectual concern. This giant creation myth, beginning and ending in the waters of the Rhine, includes in its approximately fourteen hours of music drama all the primitive instinctual emotions of love and lust, ambition and greed, incest and betrayal, envy and hate, played out by a fascinating mixture of gods with limited powers, strong giants and cunning dwarfs, and heroic but doomed men and women.

The plot of the *Ring*, an amalgamation of the *Volsunga Saga*, the *Nibelungenlied*, the Eddic poems, and Wagner's own personal touches, is a complex story of events antecedent to the action of the operas as well as events occurring offstage. The *Ring* is started when the Nibelung dwarf, Alberich, forswears love and robs the Rhine of its gold. From the gold he forces the other Nibelungs to forge for him a ring which gives the wearer world dominion. The great god Wotan, upon the advice of the tricky fire god Loge, steals the treasure from Alberich in order to pay the giants for building Valhalla, the fortress from which the gods hope to rule the world. Alberich places a curse upon the future owners of the ring, and the gods take possession of their new home.

In order to deal with his two problems—defending Valhalla and restoring the treasure (which he has not kept, but which he did steal)—Wotan starts two new families. The children of one family, sired by Wotan and a mortal woman, are Siegmund and Sieglinde. These two fall in love, though Sieglinde is already married. Their union is condemned by Fricka, Wotan's consort, who is the guardian of the family. Wotan thus must let Siegmund die. When

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1 *The Life of Richard Wagner*, 4 vols., Cambridge University Press, 2429 pp., $33.95.

2 *Richard Wagner*, Stein & Day, 226 pp., $8.95.

3 *Wagner and His World*, Scribner's, 128 pp., $8.95.

4 *Wagner and Nietzsche*, Seabury, 232 pp., $12.95.

5 *The Forging of the "Ring,"* Cambridge University Press, 248 pp., $18.95.

6 *Wagner: A Documentary Study*, edited by Herbert Barth, Dietrich Mack, and Egon Voss, Oxford University Press, 256 pp., $37.50.

7 *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, Rizzoli, 248 pp., $18.50.

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Brünnhilde, the daughter of Wotan and the earth goddess Erda —Wotan's second family—attempts to protect the doomed Siegmund. Wotan casts her out from among the gods and sentences her to remain asleep on a rock surrounded by fire until she is awakened by a fearless hero. Both father and daughter know this hero will be Siegfried, the as-yet-unborn son of Siegmund and Sieglinde.

Siegfried is brought up in the forest by Mime, the smith brother of Alberich. Mime is unable to forge a proper sword for the future hero, but, acting out Wotan's prophecy to Mime, Siegfried forges the sword himself out of the fragments of his father's shattered weapon. With it he slays Fafner, the dragon into which one of the giants has turned himself in order to protect the treasure. Then, after killing Mime, in whom he has divined murderous intentions, Siegfried goes forward, armed with sword and ring, to awaken and win Brünnhilde, and then out into the world in search of adventure.

On his travels, he meets two Gibichungs, Gunter and Gutrune, and their half-brother Hagen, the son of Alberich, who has been plotting to recover the treasure. Even before Siegfried arrives, Hagen has proposed that the hero be induced by magic to forget Brünnhilde and win her for Gunter, while Siegfried himself will marry Gutrune. Siegfried, drugged by a potion, agrees, and overpowers the unwitting Brünnhilde. Hagen then suggests vengeance to the betrayed Brünnhilde, and she supplies him with the information necessary to kill Siegfried, which he treacherously does. Brünnhilde, at last aware that he whom she had loved had not betrayed her but had instead been betrayed, realizes the working out of both the curse and the fate of the gods. She takes the ring from the dead Siegfried and immolates herself. As the waters of the Rhine rise to reclaim the ring and the gold, the fire sets Valhalla ablaze and the gods go up in flames.

FROM the time of its writing, the *Ring* has tempted critics to find an explanation of its inner meaning. What was perhaps Wagner's conscious purpose—to demonstrate the power of love to redeem—has long seemed insufficient to account for either the massiveness of the work's structure or the awesome power it possesses to move its audience. Until the past generation, undoubtedly the most impressive interpretation of the *Ring* in extramusical terms was that of George Bernard Shaw. In *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1899), Shaw found the *Ring* to be an allegory of capitalism, a vivid portrayal of the exploitation of labor in the interests of a greedy moneyed class blinded to humanity by the worship of gold.

In point of fact, support for Shaw's theory could be found in Wagner's early political allegiances; he had been a close friend of the anarchist Bakunin and was himself an active participant in the German revolution of 1848-49, suffering exile for his efforts. But unfortunately Shaw's explanation suffered a fate common to all such reductive attempts to interpret works of art; the glorious mystery of the *Ring* remained intact long after the ingenious analysis had first been found obvious and finally trivial and irrelevant.

Where Shaw's socialist scheme failed, psychology eventually stepped in. The regnant psychological explanation of the *Ring* is of the Jungian variety; no extended Freudian interpretation has yet appeared. Thus in *Wagner's Ring and its Symbols*,[8] Robert Donington assimilates Wagner's combination of Nordic myth and Schopenhauerian pessimism to the vocabulary of depth psychology, and sees the *Ring* as a symbolic story both of Wagner's own psychic struggles on the road to emotional maturity and of mankind's reliance on archetypal fantasies and patterns as a means of understanding the world.

Whatever may be said of such interpretations—one may question whether they do anything more than substitute a sophisticated myth for a primitive one—it cannot be denied that depth psychology has had a significant influence on the way Wagner in general and the *Ring* in particular have been staged since World War II. It was Wieland Wagner's intelligence—as well as a desire to distance himself from his mother's enthusiastic support of Hitler—which led him consciously to bring to bear upon his grandfather's operas those 20th-century insights of psychology and anthropology which had not previously been allowed admittance to the Bayreuth shrine.

In keeping with the modern conception of the racial unconscious and its origin in primitivism, Wieland banished realistic elements as well as bright light from his Bayreuth *Ring* productions. In their place, he substituted in 1951 the *Weltenscheibe*, a large raised disc on which all the action was to take place in an atmosphere of darkness and gloom broken only by the occasionally spotlighted singers. The disc and the gloom combined to present each character as a lonely symbolic figure battling with all-powerful instincts and natural forces.

THIS style—dubbed "neo-Bayreuth" when it has been used by others outside the control of the Wagner family as well as by the Wagners themselves—has become the prevailing orthodoxy in *Ring* productions. In the form devised by Herbert von Karajan for the 1967 Salzburg Easter Festival, it became the basis for the Metropolitan Opera production finally seen complete in New York in 1975. Recently, however, Bayreuth itself has returned to a kind of Marxist interpretation of the *Ring*, in the realistic new production staged by Chéreau at the 1976 centennial. Here the audience was presented with well-dressed capitalists, with Mime as an old Jew, and with the gods' fortress Valhalla as Wall Street; the production, in the words of the *New Yorker*, offered "a bleak look at the dehumanized society spawned by the Industrial Revolution."

There seems little chance that the new Bayreuth production—or anything similarly audacious—will be seen in New York in the near future. Indeed, no plans have so far been announced for doing the *Ring* again in New York at all; it is significant that the 1975 Metropolitan production was the first at that opera house since the 1961 sea-

[8] St. Martin's, 342 pp., $4.95 (paper).

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son. The San Francisco Opera does do individual operas from the cycle with fair frequency, and Seattle has been presenting a full *Ring* in both German and English. But the Seattle production, to judge from the critical response, has not been of international quality, and in any case the Metropolitan remains, for better or worse, in artistic and financial resources the premier opera company in the United States.

EXACTLY how much the *Ring* must be seen to be experienced is a difficult question to answer. Richard Wagner was himself disillusioned with the staging—nominally under his control—of the first Bayreuth production. He is often quoted to this effect:

> How I abhor the atmosphere of grease paint and mummery! When I think that a character like Kundry will henceforth be mimed, I am at once reminded of those disgusting masquerades, and now that I have created the invisible orchestra [a reference to the hidden, recessed orchestra pit at Bayreuth], I would like to invent the invisible stage.

These words were cited by Wieland Wagner to head an important 1951 article entitled "Tradition and Innovation," in which he not only defended new approaches to staging but also admitted that Wagner's is a music

> which transmits [the composer's] visions in so expressive a language that it is well-nigh impossible to duplicate the vision for the eye. The onlooker will inevitably fall behind the listener, even though the scenic problems may happily have been solved . . . we must still admit that the stage can, at its best, provide only a sparse reflection of that which is triumphantly conveyed from the orchestra pit.

In any case, while one need hardly deny the added dimension which is provided by visual means, today's recorded versions of the *Ring* provide, in the absence of staged performances, a magnificent opportunity to experience the music.

Until recently, the phonograph literature of this music was anything but plentiful, although excerpts have long been available, including performances by some of the greatest voices ever to sing Wagner. Available today on LP transfers, the work of Frieda Leider,[9] Lauritz Melchior,[10] and Friedrich Schorr[11] shaped the standards by which their successors have been judged. The sound of these records, advanced for their day, remains acceptable, if of limited brilliance and depth.

Yet, of all opera, this music may be the least amenable to extraction of its highlights. Such skimming certainly does violence to Wagner's basic goal, the replacement of the succession of set pieces formerly characteristic of opera—arias, ensembles, and interludes—by an integrated and continuous flow of dramatic plot and musical development. As a result of the music's great length and the creative nature of the works themselves, adequate representation of the *Ring* on records awaited the arrival of the LP in 1948. But even then, coverage was slow in coming. Though LP transfers were made of the 1935 Bruno Walter-Lotte Lehmann-Melchoir Act I of *Die Walküre*[12] and of the 1945 *Walküre* Act III[13] with Artur Rodzinski, Helen Traubel, and Herbert Janssen, the longest new recording in the early years of the LP was another *Walküre* Act III,[14] this time from Bayreuth with Herbert von Karajan, Astrid Varnay, and Sigurd Björling. From *Rheingold* there was as yet nothing, and from *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* only the very end of each opera, passages which had been obtainable in several versions on 78's.

IN THE early 50's, however, a complete *Ring* was a gleam in the eye of John Culshaw, a young producer with English Decca. He had been involved in Decca's abortive attempt to record the *Ring* in Bayreuth in 1951. Later, he had encouraged Decca to release what he felt to be an insufficient—but complete—*Götterdämmerung* from Oslo with Kirsten Flagstad as Brünnhilde.[15] Finally, in 1958, he was able to go ahead with a recording of *Rheingold*—using Flagstad, at the end of her career, as Fricka—with Georg Solti and the Vienna Philharmonic.[16] This recording, released to the widest critical enthusiasm and unexpectedly large commercial success, inaugurated the present era of the *Ring* on records. It was followed by *Siegfried*[17] in 1962, *Götterdämmerung*[18] in 1964, and finally, though out of order, *Walküre*[19] in 1965. Not to be outdone, Deutsche Grammophon, between 1967 and 1970, recorded Karajan's Salzburg production with the Berlin Philharmonic.[20]

These two complete sets are "studio" recordings (as is a third "budget" effort on Westminster with Hans Swarowsky conducting the Southwest German Philharmonic). Although made in a hall, they were done in sections, repeated as necessary, without the presence of an audience; not until later were the parts assembled into a complete performance. Such a procedure—though it runs the risk of losing both spontaneity and the sense of cohesion and integration which can only result from a performance done before people and progressing straight through from beginning to end—nonetheless provides the ultimate in control over recording characteristics and errors of notes and balances. As a result, these recordings must inevitably be considered the norm; "live" recordings, even though perhaps pieced together out of several performances, must always justify their technical shortcomings and (relatively) inferior recorded sound by their special feeling of life and drama.

Such "live" recordings of the *Ring* do exist. One was made in Bayreuth in 1966 and 1967 at festival performances and rehearsals conducted by Karl Böhm.[21] Another, an English National Opera

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9 Angel COLH 105.
10 Seraphim 1B 6086.
11 Angel COLH 105; Preiser LV 23; Preiser LV 125.
12 Seraphim 60190.
13 Odyssey 32260018E.
14 Electrola IC 181-03 035/36M.
15 London 4603 (deleted); all of the music sung by Flagstad from this performance is currently available on Richmond RS-62019.
16 London OSA 1309.
17 London OSA 1508.
18 London OSA 1604.
19 London OSA 1509.
20 Deutsche Grammophon 2720051.
21 Philips 6747037.

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production, is three-quarters of the way toward commercial release on EMI. *Rheingold*,[22] *Walküre*[23] (both marketed here by Angel), and *Siegfried*[24] have already been issued, with *Götterdämmerung* soon to follow (most of Act III has been available for several years in a studio recording on another label[25]). These recordings, made during actual performances, are conducted by the Englishman Reginald Goodall, feature English (and Commonwealth) singers, and are sung in English.

Two live performances in the more usual meaning of the term are also available, both of them conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. The first preserves the *Ring* cycle at La Scala in 1950,[26] and is distinguished by the presence of Flagstad as Brünnhilde. In this case, though the tapes on which these recordings are based were obviously made for radio broadcast rather than commercial release, it is impossible to know the extent to which they have been pieced together, as each cycle was given three times during the 1950 season, and tapes of at least two of those cycles are in existence. This *Ring*, which is currently available at an absurdly low price, only reached a wide market in 1976; a later Furtwängler cycle,[27] initially broadcast at a concert performancer (sung but not staged) in Rome in 1953, was released after many years of legal difficulties in 1972.

Nor do these commercially available discs exhaust present opportunities to hear the *Ring*. In recent years, due to the proliferation of tape recorders, every important broadcast has been caught on tape, and a flourishing, if for legal reasons necessarily quiet, market has grown up around them. Many *Rings* are available in this form; among them are the performances from Bayreuth in 1957 conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch, from the Met in 1975 with Sixten Ehrling, and the 1976 Bayreuth cycle staged by Chéreau and led by Pierre Boulez. Unfortunately, the recorded sound of these "private" tapes is highly variable, ranging from excellent in the 1975 Met broadcasts to opaque and fuzzy in those from Bayreuth.

Taken all together, these recorded performances provide a remarkable chance not only to hear the music of the *Ring* but also to examine how this masterpiece of the 19th century has been interpreted by different artists over a period encompassing more than a generation. The first cycle, from La Scala in 1950, uses a star pre-war cast and conductor, while in 1976 at Bayreuth the cast was comprised of singers relatively young and little known in this country, and the conductor, Boulez, was from a non-German tradition and in any case new to the music. Here, then, is an entire history of musical performance concentrated on what is perhaps the largest single integrated body of music ever written. By scrutinizing the way it has been done, we may learn where these operas are, where they have been, and perhaps even where they may be going.

THE obvious place to start is with the singing. As might be expected in performances involving so many people, the range of quality is enormous. It is also not surprising that no one cast contains all the best singers, and that no singer is always in his or her best voice. One cannot, however, help noticing how many good singers these records offer. At the same time, few remain in the mind as memorable.

In considering, for example, the central role of Brünnhilde, it is clear that the challenge is so great that the response must be imperfect. (Perhaps this reflects the truth contained in Artur Schnabel's remark that he only wanted to perform music that was better than he could play it.) The Brünnhildes in these performances include the most important Wagnerian sopranos of our time. Among them, in addition to Flagstad, are Birgit Nilsson, Astrid Varnay, Martha Mödl, and Helga Dernesch. Flagstad's, in the first Furtwängler records, remains the most beautiful sound; Nilsson, on both the Böhm and Solti sets as well as the 1975 Met broadcasts, is chiefly remarkable for the physical strength and ease of her vocalism. Like Flagstad, though more impassioned, she seems unable to delineate varied moods in her singing. For such an achievement one must go to Mödl and Varnay, the Brünnhildes of the later Furtwängler and the Knappertsbusch *Rings*. But here, as always in singing, dramatic personal qualities conflict with pure vocal beauty; Dernesch, in the Karajan set, offers what may be the best available compromise.

Among the leading male roles—Siegmund in *Walküre*, Siegfried in the last two operas of the cycle, and the Wotans of *Rheingold*, *Walküre*, and *Siegfried* (where Wotan is called the Wanderer)—there are perhaps even fewer singers of the highest stature. Of the nine singers doing Wotan, only one, Ferdinand Frantz (in both Furtwängler sets), bears comparison with such earlier singers as Schorr, Rudolf Bockelmann,[28] and, at least on one excerpt, Alexander Kipnis.[29] And even Frantz does not demonstrate the roundness and individuality of character which a singer must convey to be more than vocally arresting. The situation is little different among the Siegmunds and Siegfrieds of these performances; only Jon Vickers, Karajan's Siegmund, is of a classic level, though Helge Brilioth in Karajan's *Götterdämmerung* is perhaps the most nearly adequate Siegfried of our time.

In the smaller though still often frighteningly difficult male and female roles, there are many fine singers. Among the performances which will not easily be equaled may be mentioned the hauntingly fragile Sieglinde of Gundula Janowitz in the Karajan *Walküre*, the Mime of Julius Patzak on the later Furtwängler discs, and the Fricka of Josephine Veasey (Karajan). In general, the men seem more comfortable and less wobbly than the women throughout the entire range of these performances.

Beyond the individual merit of the singers involved, and with the exception of one set, every *Ring*

22 Angel SDC 3825.
23 Angel SELX 3826.
24 EMI SLS 875.
25 Unicorn UNS 245/6.
26 Murray Hill 940477.
27 Seraphim IC-6076, IE-6077, 1E-6078, 1E-6079.
28 Preiser LV 165.
29 Preiser LV 165.

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discussed here provides singing easily sufficient to communicate the music. Moreover, even after making allowances for technical quality and the conditions under which each recording was made, no one set can be said to be vocally vastly better or worse than another. The exception is the Bayreuth *Ring of* 1976, where the vocalism justified Harold Schonberg's earlier comment that as far as dramatic sopranos and heroic tenors are concerned, "we are in trouble on a worldwide basis." The work of this youngish cast seems especially discouraging coming as it does on the heels of the 1975 Met broadcasts, which were marked by some excellent singing from a remarkably old cast. Many reservations apply as well to the singing in the English National Opera *Ring*, where the tenors sound all too often as if they were singing light opera, the lower male voices are over-smooth and avuncular, and the women tend to sound plummy and tremulous.

ONE has the impression that, aside from the specific vocal styles of the English National Opera singers, their difficulties stem in part from the use of English as the language of performance. Much has been made of the new translation done for the production by the well-known English music critic, Andrew Porter.[30] The translation is clear and simple, and, as such things go, singable. But three comments suggest themselves. First, despite what are obviously the best efforts of singers and recording engineers alike, many, if not most, of the words are lost; this is invariably true when the music is loud, and often even when it is soft. This would seem to undercut the basic reason for doing opera in English —so that the audience can follow the story. Still, there is no reason to believe that an English-speaking audience is in any worse position than a German audience listening to a performance in the original; the music simply is not kind to an easy perception of the text.

Second, and more serious, is the effect the characteristic sounds of the English language have on the listener's perception of the *music*. The distinctiveness of one vocal music as opposed to another is determined by more than pitch and rhythm, melodic contours and phrasing; it is also determined by the very sounds of the words, whatever their meaning. Such is especially the case in the *Ring*, where Wagner writes in a highly personal, alliterative German style. What is lost and distorted in translation may easily be demonstrated by listening to recordings of excerpts from the *Ring* in French. Here the singers involved, Marjorie Lawrence[31] and Germaine Lubin,[32] are significant Wagnerians of the 1930's. And yet the mere sound of the words, with their French vowels and consonants, makes one think involuntarily of the music of Massenet. (Remarkably, this is true not only of Germaine Lubin but also of the younger singer, Marjorie Lawrence, even though she was not French but Australian!)

Finally, and most important, the use of a translated text, rather than bringing the performer and the audience closer to a work of art, may well erect an additional barrier to it. Opera, like any other art form, is the product of an entire cultural complex which shapes a composer's innermost thought since birth and which finds concrete expression in the language in which he writes. To learn foreign languages in order to perform French or German or Italian or Russian works is of course an added burden for a singer, but art asks a great deal from its performers, just as it does from its audiences.

If the English National Opera productions were presented as something in the nature of a necessary substitute, to be recommended on the basis of their didactic and pedagogic service, it would not be hard to welcome them; if they were instructive and enjoyable as well, that would be quite enough to ask. But it would seem that in the minds of their promoters, these productions have a special textual and therefore artistic value. In the notes accompanying the ENO recording of *Rheingold*, Peter Moores, whose foundation is supporting the records, writes:

> Often the translation can not only make the work comprehensible and thus available and immediate to each member of the audience by speaking to him in his own language, but also clarify a text which exists in a dated or obscure form.

And he goes on to recommend a review of the ENO's *Siegfried* by a German critic writing in *Die Welt*:

> The English are now the owners of the 20th-century *Ring* while we, with our teeth that are losing their bite, still have to chew away at the language of Wagner, which sounds more and more discordant as the years go by.

Would this be argued about Shakespeare in Spanish, or about Racine in Italian? Or is this approach good only for opera, which some see in any case as an intellectually déclassé art? One wonders whether all the claims for the English-language *Ring* are really fully believed in by its proponents, or whether the real meaning of all the ballyhoo surrounding this and similar efforts is not in the first instance part of an attempt to encourage local artists, and in the wider sense part of the campaign to boost the flagging self-confidence of today's troubled England.

ALTHOUGH one cannot deny the high importance of singing in this music, even more fundamental is the role of the conductor. In these mature works of Wagner the orchestra is the foundation of the drama, extending and commenting on the work of the singers, and often serving as the sole carrier of the theatrical as well as of the musical material. An orchestra of such size and complexity is powerless without a leader; to conduct a *Ring* cycle is to undertake perhaps the most important task which can face a performing musician.

A conductor may be an inspiring force, responsible for the basic conception of a performance as well as for its execution. Or he may be a traffic cop, a manager striving for the most orderly and efficient use of the widely disparate artistic forces

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30 *The Ring of the Nibelung* (German text with English translation), Norton, 329 pp., $15.00.

31 Preiser LV 133.

32 Preiser LV 225.

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which make up his vocal and orchestral cast. Of the eight conductors represented in these recordings, Karl Böhm is the best exemplar of the manager. His 1966-67 Bayreuth recordings are first-class instances of the work of the *Kapellmeister*. Clear, efficient, forward in tempo, and healthy in momentum, his efforts enable the music to be heard to advantage. The same can be said for his singers. Without injecting much of his own personality into the music, he gets on with his work, leaving the audience satisfied, if perhaps not terribly moved. In a like vein, though lacking something of Böhm's polished vitality, is the work of Sixten Ehrling at the Met in 1975.

The case of Pierre Boulez is more complicated. Though lacking the immense experience of a Böhm, he too is clear and efficient, as well as inclined to quickness. A general feature of his work, here as elsewhere, is the curiously unaccented playing of the orchestra, an avoidance of strong beats or of stress at the beginning of bars. The musical effect is to combine local flatness and placidity with a long-run accumulation (due to the lack of rubato) of a good deal of momentum. The removal of sentimentality from his conducting is welcome in an age of glamor conductors; whether Boulez will ever make any deeply felt personal contribution to this music remains to be seen.

THE work of Georg Solti in his *Ring* set is difficult to evaluate. He seems to have concentrated upon the exaggeration of short-range effects, and in particular upon giving more prominence to the brass than has any other conductor. Many of these effects are startling, as are his frequent sharp changes of tempo in excess of Wagner's indications. Regardless of the individual excellence of many passages, his *Ring* lacks an overall conception, whether musical or perhaps philosophical, that would go beyond the separate characters and their scenes to the question of the wider image of the entire work.

This qualified appraisal of Solti's *Ring* owes something to the fact that his recording is so clearly a phonographic document, a revelation of what advanced techniques can do to supply the listener with what he misses through the absence of staging. These techniques involve the addition of sound effects like crowd noises and thunderstorms, various exaggerated clanking noises produced by a literal following of Wagner's stage instructions, and special acoustical environments for several of the characters. This triumph of the recording over the music may well be the result in this case of a parallel triumph of the producer—John Culshaw—over the conductor. In his book about the making of the *Ring* records,[33] Culshaw tells how Solti had to be convinced some time *after* the music had been recorded of the rightness of adding some non-musical noises (no doubt suggested by Wagner's direction that Gutrune and others emit horrified cries as Siegfried's arm rises when Hagen attempts to snatch the ring from his hand) toward the end of the last act of *Götterdämmerung:*

> For some reason Solti was against any sound at the point, possibly because he felt it might interfere with the hushed music that accompanies Brünnhilde's entrance. At the time [when the music was being recorded] we had more urgent things to worry about, so I determined to add the sound of the cries afterwards. (I felt sure that Solti would accept the point as dramatically valid once he had heard it done properly, and this turned out to be true, though he still does not let his singers do it in a stage production.)

The "hushed music" Culshaw refers to consists in fact of three chords drawn from earlier material but in this form suggesting strongly the Dresden Amen which Wagner used in *Parsifal* (where it is called the motive of the Grail); Culshaw's exaggerated introduction of "the sound of the cries" robs the passage of its architectural function in setting off Brünnhilde's taking of all the action of the opera into her own hands. The quotation conveys very well the extraordinary role played by Culshaw in the making of the Solti *Ring*.

An overall conception of the *Ring* is precisely what Wilhelm Furtwängler, in both his sets, provides. Solid, rich, built up from the deepest instruments of the orchestra, his *Ring* offers a musical tribute to Wagner's dedication of the operas: *Im Vertrauen auf den deutschen Geist entworfen* ("Conceived with trust in the German Spirit"). The Furtwängler performances—of which the earlier is more dramatic and the later more reflective—are also notable for the conductor's mastery of pacing, and his absolute justice in balancing contrast and continuity of both dynamics and tempi; fortunately, the recorded sound of his performances, though by no means up to the brilliant level of the Solti set, is good enough to communicate what Furtwängler does. Compared to him, Knappertsbusch and Goodall are so heavy and over-serious as to strain even the German-opera lover's tolerance of boredom. Goodall in particular favors tempi so slow and so stodgy that his performances become stuck in self-contemplation.

IF Böhm is the highest type of the efficient conductor, and Furtwängler the noble German traditionalist, Herbert von Karajan has provided a new, singularly different, and vastly moving conception of the *Ring*. In the past, Karajan's conducting has often been called ice-cold; his *Ring* recordings have suffered a similar criticism, and his *Götterdämmerung* in particular has been described as a "positive glorification of evil." True, there is in Karajan's *Ring* very little of uplift, of optimism, or of justification for the brutal and indeed evil nature of so much of what goes on in the operas, and it is possible to see what is meant when his performance is called cold—it is humanly unredeeming. Yet Karajan has been able to contain this brutal world within the limits of art because he presents it to us as a dream heard clearly, but as if from another place. Through magnificent orchestral clarity, transparent recording, and the careful husbanding of his beautiful but often small

[33] *Ring Resounding*, Viking, 278 pp., $7.50. Culshaw's broadcast talks on the *Ring* have been collected in *Reflections on Wagner's Ring*, Viking, 105 pp., $6.95.

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voices, Karajan has created a *Ring* that is bearable because the strength of its vision is matched by the unreality of that vision. There is in Karajan's conception nothing to comfort us save the knowledge that we can survive the nightmare. That he has succeeded in projecting and even imposing this frightening conception is the surest sign of his achievement as perhaps the most significant conductor to emerge since World War II.

It is doubtful that Karajan's achievement, requiring as it does a great conductor, hand-picked forces, and a particular tolerance and insight from the audience, can ever become a norm for the performance of the *Ring*. Yet whatever the level of performances may be in the future, the music, which triumphs through its performances, triumphs equally in spite of them. Performances are necessary, but they are transient. This may not be a comforting thought to performers, but lovers of the music, which endures forever, may find in it a peculiarly satisfying reassurance.

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New Israeli Writing

Alan Mintz

THE state of Israel was conceived by force of a messianic vision, but its existence has been maintained by order, sacrifice, and the rational setting of priorities—and this in the face of another, more ominous vision held by its neighbors. Life under such mixed conditions of ordinariness and dread might well seem cribbed and predetermined, and it is understandable that Israelis would search for various ways of becoming released from it. In Israel's literature, that search has often taken one of two forms, a looking back to happier times, and a reaching forward toward some new vision of an end, either individual or collective, in which the anxieties of history will be dissolved. Indeed, ever since the pioneer period, one of the chief functions of Israel's literature, especially its prose literature, has been to represent and also to criticize this dual urge toward nostalgia and apocalypse in Israeli consciousness.

A recent spate of translations gives the English reader a chance to observe at first hand this tendency in Israeli writing. Of particular interest are two new anthologies. One, *Contemporay Israeli Literature,** which began as a special number of the journal *TriQuarterly,* is quite substantial, containing ten short stories and the work of twenty-three poets, and featuring an introduction by Shimon Sandbank and an afterword by Robert Alter, both extremely useful. The second anthology, *New Writing in Israel,*† is a more modest and uneven affair, with an abbreviated poetry section and no introduction. And one should also mention a new novel by Shulamith Hareven, *City of Many Days,*** and a collection of short stories by A.B. Yehoshua, *Early in the Summer of 1970.*††

In recent Israeli fiction, the period returned to most often as an object of nostalgia is that of the British Mandate, a period when the conflict that was to become the Jewish state's lot after 1948 seemed neither inevitable nor irremediable. Jerusalem between the two world wars is the setting of Shulamith Hareven's *City of Many Days,* a novel whose ostensible focus is the history of a specific Sephardi family but whose real subject is Jerusalem itself, bodied forth in the book through a polyglot cast of eccentrics who make their way through the city's bewildering array of sights and smells. Miss Hareven's Jerusalem catalogue (gorgeously rendered in English by Hillel Halkin) is meant to suggest the idyll of possibility which somehow was allowed to flourish in the years before the rise of intensive nationalism in Palestine. Relations between Arabs and Jews during the early Mandate are depicted as amicable, if standoffish. The British presence is exemplified by an army officer so fascinated by his "colonial" subjects that he throws in his lot with them. And then there is the most vital element of all, the Jews themselves, the half-pious, half-worldly Sephardim whose luxuriant openness becomes all the more precious a quality as it is seen to be eclipsed by the gathering of historical forces.

ALAN MINTZ *teaches Hebrew literature at Columbia. His* George Eliot and the Novel of Vocation *will be published by Harvard University Press in the spring.*

*Edited by Elliott Anderson, poetry edited by Robert Friend, Jewish Publication Society, 342 pp., $8.95.

†Edited by Ezra Spicehandler, co-edited by Curtis Arnson, Schocken, 225 pp., $10.95 ($4.95 paper).

** Translated by Hillel Halkin, Doubleday, 205 pp., $7.95.

††Translated by Miriam Arad and Pauline Shrier, Doubleday, 165 pp., $5.95.

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Unfortunately, the charm of Miss Hareven's picture of Jerusalem—there is no question of the beauty of her evocation—is purchased through her excluding from it anything which is *not* charming. Miss Hareven's characters are innocent of history, and their innocence attenuates their charm until it threatens to become mere idealization. The Sephardi community has, it is true, been underrepresented in modern Hebrew fiction, but Miss Hareven tends to err in the opposite direction. There is scarcely a trace here of the large numbers of Eastern European Jews, the pioneers and the socialists, who during these same years were changing the face of the Jewish settlement in Palestine and preparing the greater transformation to come. Lacking a dialectical view, which could comprehend what was being created as well as what was being destroyed, *City of Many Days* remains an exquisite piece of literary nostalgia rather than a full evocation of a historical moment that might instruct as much as it delights.

The Mandate setting is put to a much different purpose in David Shahar's story "Louidor Louidor," which is included in *Contemporary Israeli Literature*. For Shahar (two of whose books have already appeared in English, a collection of short stories, *News from Jerusalem*, and a novel, *The Palace of Shattered Vessels*), Palestine of those years is also a landscape of eccentrics, as it is for Miss Hareven, but his eccentrics are driven by the contradictions of history rather than by private idiosyncracies. Louidor, for example, is a distracted Tolstoyan intellectual who comes to Palestine to realize his rationalist-pacifist principles in a Jewish homeland. Shocked to find the country filled with Arabs, he converts to Islam in order to have the moral right to appeal to his new "brethren" to leave Palestine for the "blessed lands of Arabia." Louidor's eventual fate—he is beaten up and dismembered by an Arab gang—is for Shahar a way of suggesting that imported visions will always be rejected by a land so pocked by historical ironies and crossed national destinies.

Though the tone of Shahar's story is elegiac and nostalgic, what motivates his hero is rather an apocalyptic (and almost psychotic) passion for redemption, a yearning for an impossible future in which all obstacles to moral purity will have finally disappeared. Something of the same passion motivates Joseph della Reina, the hero of a fine story by Dan Tsalka included in *New Writing in Israel*. The story is based on a kabbalistic legend about a 15th-century mystic who attempted to bring about the messianic age by capturing Satan, but who failed under terrifying circumstances and ended his days as Satan's ally and as the lover of Lilith, the arch-female demon of Jewish folklore. In Tsalka's retelling, the legend takes an eerily modern turn by the addition of an existential context, with della Reina's passion understood psychologically as that familiar kind of moral zeal in which the unacknowledged element of self-aggrandizement insures future corruption and failure.

If messianism, even misplaced messianism, is the "positive" paradigm of Jewish apocalypse, the Holocaust, both as event and as symbol, is its negative pole. Among Hebrew writers of fiction, Aharon Appelfeld is the one who has most unequivocally taken the Holocaust as a field of imaginative activity. Appelfeld, whose work deserves to be better known in English, is a master of obliqueness; rather than describing atrocity directly, he focuses instead on the historical moments just before and just after the Holocaust, and speaks through them of what is in itself unspeakable.

Appelfeld's story, "Badenheim 1939," included in both *Contemporary Israeli Literature* and *New Writing in Israel*, is an ingenious and ornate parable about the fall of German-speaking Jewry. The locale is an Austrian resort town whose inhabitants reveal themselves to each other in the course of the story as they are forced to register with the local authorities as Jews. Instead of being panicked and cowed, the Jews assume a kind of calm gaiety. As the registration proceeds and the routine of the resort breaks down, there is an immense sense of relief at being able to confess the deep and troublesome burden of Jewishness, "as if they were talking about a chronic disease which there was no longer any reason to hide." With the resort finally closed and the transports waiting, the Jews, who believe they are being returned to the simpler life of their ancestral home in Poland, express appreciation to the authorities and look forward to their "repatriation." It is characteristic of Appelfeld's laconic and perverse brilliance that the story ends here, with no further comment or elaboration.

Like the state of Israel itself, that ambitious social experiment, the kibbutz, came into being in large part through a messianic drive, and it, too, paradoxically, has been maintained through the anti-messianic values of order, rationality, and institutionalization. As setting and theme, the kibbutz has undoubtedly been overworked in Hebrew literature, but it still retains a rich potential for fictional treatment. The isolation and self-sufficiency of the kibbutz offer exactly the kind of manageable and self-contained world that is so desirable to fiction, and the situation of the kibbutz suggests a microcosm of the larger situation of Israel as nation and society. Among recent Israeli writers, the novelist Amos Oz has in fact used the kibbutz in just this way (as in his 1966 novel *Elsewhere, Perhaps*); he is represented in *Contemporary Israeli Literature* by a kibbutz story from the 60's. *New Writing in Israel* also contains a story with a kibbutz setting, this one by Yitzhak Ben Ner. Both stories are examinations of the price paid by kibbutz members for, precisely, the rationality of kibbutz existence.

Ben Ner's "A Village Death" is a wonderfully told monologue, whose narrator, a forty-three-year-old member of a collective village, has assumed the responsibilities of undertaker and mourner of the dead in order to expiate an affair he had twenty years earlier with the wife of another member. His death-in-life represents one way of dealing with the persistence of two

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antagonistic forms of feeling: lust for what is alien and dangerous, and love for one's native ground.

Oz's "A Hollow Stone" concerns the honored memory of a kibbutz founder whose brand of romantic socialism led him to his death in the Spanish Civil War. His wife has been left behind to play the role of a sainted widow of the revolution—a role the kibbutz despises. "Martyrdoms, Mediterranean tragedies, emotional arabesques," remarks the anonymous narrator who represents the community's conventional wisdom, "were irreconcilable with the principles by which we guided our lives."

To escape a life hedged in by principles and responsibilities, a life symbolized in miniature by the kibbutz but characteristic as well of Israel's entire national situation, Israelis flee to zones of imagined freedom like the United States, a country where there is seemingly no limit to the romance of individual achievement and where a man has room to pursue private dreams of experience, money, sex. The fragility of such dreams is suggested by the novelist Yoram Kaniuk in "They've Moved the House," one of a pair of stories with an American setting that are included in *Contemporary Israeli Literature*. With enormous linguistic energy Kaniuk evokes the mixture of wide-eyed naiveté and grandiose ambition that marks his two Israeli *schlemiels* as they untiringly conceive new money-making schemes.*

In "The Orgy," an amusing and cerebral story by the well-known poet, Yehuda Amichai,† America likewise serves as a symbol of liberation from the disciplines of history and holiness that are the conditions of life in Israel, but it is a symbol heavily charged with irony. Amichai's first-person narrator is an Israeli student, worn down by his doctoral studies, who comes to New York in search of a new source of transcendence. He finds it in sex, something America has abundantly to offer and a commodity which in Amichai's rendering assumes a kind of Sabbatian appropriateness as the supreme value in a transvalued world, a world in which the orgy has become the means of reconstructing the rituals of collective experience. Amichai's story ends with a jocular account of a road show formed by the narrator and his friends to expound and practice their new Torah.

NOSTALGIA for an idealized past, the frenzied search for a transcendent future—it is one of the marks of A.B. Yehoshua's achievement as a writer that he refuses to give way to either of these temptations. In his new collection, *Early in the Summer of 1970*, as in a previous collection, *Three Days and a Child*, Yehoshua sticks resolutely to the harrowing confines of the present, even though, within those confines, he often works with the touch not of a realist but of a fabulist. The stories in the new collection take place in the period between 1967 and 1973, a time of wearying stalemate between Israel and its Arab neighbors, punctuated by random, sporadic death. In Yehoshua's imaginative reconstruction of this period, the larger collective purposes of the national existence have lost their clarity; his characters struggle on, but the struggle discloses no meaning to them. If there is any heroism in Yehoshua's world, it consists in the courage to face facts as they are and still proceed with the business of life.

The nameless hero of "Missile Base 612" cannot muster such courage. Rather, he persists in demanding some revelation that will explain the disorientation of his existence. Like the aimless fighting between Israel and Egypt along the Suez Canal, his life has become a permanent battle fought from fixed positions: though he and his wife share the same house and the same child, they squabble or ignore each other, and at the university where he works, his career has bogged down. Thus, when he is asked to spend a day lecturing in the Sinai to army troops, he is grateful for the chance to break out of his isolation. Yet he who has come to lecture is actually the one in need of enlightenment. The army is full of people who have adapted to the conditions of uncertainty and attrition, and his fumbling and grandiloquent overtures to the men are met by stupefaction or bemused skepticism.

Finally, he steals a close look at the missiles on the base and is electrified by the spectacle they present of impersonal, erotic power. But he characteristically fails to grasp the nature of this power. Searching for an ephiphany that will explain, and release him from, the deadlock of his own life, he cannot understand that the purpose of the missiles is *not* to be fired, that they are there to prevent an apocalypse by remaining in check.

Loss of meaning, and the baffled search for a way to overcome that loss, is similarly at the center of the title story, "Early in the Summer of 1970," Yehoshua's brilliant recasting of the motif of the sacrifice of Isaac. (This story was first published in English in COMMENTARY, March 1973.) The father here is an aging high-school teacher who has stubbornly refused to retire, to accept the fact that his life is over. He looks to his son, a university lecturer who has recently returned from abroad with a young American wife, for the enunciation of some new message, the banner of a new generation. But the son is remote and ungiving. Then one day, while teaching in school, he is suddenly informed that this son, who is on reserve duty, in the Jordan Valley, has been killed.

When he goes to identify the body, however, it develops that there has been an administrative error: the dead man is not his son after all. There follows a frantic journey to the outpost where the son's unit is on maneuvers, and a face-to-face encounter in which the son shows himself to be completely unresponsive to the ordeal his father has undergone; all he can do is mutter bitterly about his military experience, "such a loss of time . . . so pointless."

The story is told with an obsessive, almost painful, allegiance to the point of view of the father, who returns constantly in his mind to the moment when he was given the

*Kaniuk's latest novel in English, *Rocking Horse* (translated by Richard Flantz, Harper & Row, 408 pp., $12.50), explores a similar theme.

†The most recent collection of Amichai's poems in English is *Amen* (translated by the author and Ted Hughes, Harper & Row, 110 pp., $7.95).

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news of his son's "death." With each repetition, it becomes clearer that instead of reliving a moment of pain, the father is actually reliving a moment in which his son's life, and his own, seem finally to have taken on meaning. He sees himself, guilty and bereft, but somehow heroic, offering up his son on the altar of national existence, and he sees his son as a willing martyr in the same cause. As in the biblical tale, however, the son is allowed to live. But whereas in Abraham's case it was trust in God that was being tested and revealed, in the case of Yehoshua's story what is being tested is only the father's desperate and misplaced faith in a deliverance wrought by others. And whereas in the biblical story, ordeal is followed by covenant, by the striking of a new redemptive relation between God and His chosen ones, "Early in the Summer of 1970" ends back in unillusioned reality: the ordeal will simply continue.

Yehoshua's stories sound grim and severe when stripped to their moral burden, but as works of art they are marvelously accomplished, rich and precise in language and startlingly inventive in their use of non-realistic modes of narration. As a moralist, Yehoshua is relentless, and he shows his characters no quarter. Conspicuously absent from his work is just that element of sympathy toward the yearning for deliverance which runs like a scarlet thread through so much serious Jewish writing in this century—and not only in this century.

Still, what Yeshoshua does share with almost all Hebrew writers of the modern period, and with many contemporary Israeli writers in particular, is a higly charged sense of obligation toward his material, an obligation not only to depict faithfully but also to evaluate and comment upon the twists and turns of the national consciousness as they reveal themselves in character and incident. That so many Israeli writers have been able to transform this sense of obligation into successful works of the imagination is a remarkable achievement, and in its own way a tribute to the vigor of the Jewish national spirit.

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Books in Review

Maoist Mandarins

CHINESE SHADOWS. By SIMON LEYS. *Viking. 220 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by CHARLES HORNER

SINCE Marco Polo, Western visitors to China have been awed by China's achievements or repelled by its backwardness—or simply confounded by its complexities. And for centuries, accounts of China have had a substantial impact of their own on Western sensibilities, creating images which have influenced Western politics, ethics, and aesthetics. Simon Leys, who in real life is Pierre Ryckmans, a Belgian art historian and Sinologist, writes of his extended stay in the People's Republic of China with a clear sense of his place in this tradition of travelers returned from Cathay with seemingly incredible tales to tell.

Chinese Shadows is a searing indictment of the Maoist system and a brilliant critique of much of the recent Western writing about China, filled as it is with apologies for Chinese totalitarianism. Written with elegance and intensity, and informed by a substantial knowledge of things Chinese, the book (which first appeared in French in 1974) is based principally upon a six-month visit to China in 1972. In it Leys reports on the staged tours, the forced isolation of the visitor, the aridity of Marxist propaganda, the destruction of traditional Chinese culture.

In Leys's view, the new Maoist mandarins have failed even to address the tasks appropriate to a revolution. In condemning the old system, the regime has in fact carried forward its worst features while preserving none of its sensibility or humanity:

> The present regime in China has destroyed the cultural and human values of the past only to retain its vices; it prolongs in its own interest the habits of feudalism and military bureaucracy. The psychology and political methods of the few old men who run China today derive directly from the Empire.

The governance of China now rests, Leys says, with a "bureaucratic *apparat* that is dull, dogmatic, mediocre, arrogant, neurotic, frozen in conformism, terrified of initiative. . . ." Once, Maoism may have been "a conquering religion, a fighting weapon." Now "it has become an alibi, a ruse, a formal occupation whose wholly negative virtue is to cover a void, fill up the silence, people a desert." For Leys, Maoist China is neither vital nor virulent—perhaps not even especially dangerous—but instead endlessly depressing.

As important as Leys's critique of Maoism is his penetrating analysis and uncompromising rebuke of those foreigners who have become Maoism's witting or unwitting apologists. To Leys's mind, the embrace of Chinese totalitarianism reflects first of all an older Sinophilia, especially among the European intelligentsia:

> The Maoist fashions that prevail in the West today in some intellectual circles are remarkably similar in their dynamic to the passion for all *chinoiserie* in the 18th century. It is a new exoticism based, like the earlier ones, on ignorance and imagination. With the best intention in the world it shows, unconsciously, an immense contempt for the Chinese, for their humanity, their real life, their language, their culture, their past and their present.

There are also those Western ideologues (as well as Western seekers after novelty) who see in China's pre-industrial condition—which is to say, its poverty—a post-industrial utopia, free of air-pollution and traffic jams. And still others, many journalists and diplomats among them, lower themselves to "toadying flattery" and the mere mouthing of Chinese propaganda.

It is not only the Left which appreciates the absence of freedom in the new Chinese order, Leys writes. He notes the "clerical-minded souls . . . who harbor a certain nostalgia for totalitarianism and unconsciously regret the passing of the Inquisition." Such people, Leys says, "will find in Maoist China the incarnation of a medieval dream, where institutionalized Truth has a strong secular arm to impose dogma, stifle heresy, and uproot immorality." Unlike "left-wing" Sinophilia, "right-wing" Sinophilia finds support in China's anti-Soviet stance; one "understands" and excuses Maoism so long as China is a *de facto* strategic ally of the West.

The good notices China has received in Western intellectual and journalistic circles, Leys points out, bear a discouraging similarity to an earlier generation's reporting about the Soviet Union. Yet whereas everyone in the West has heard by now of the Soviet dissidents, such is the effectiveness of the Chinese system that we do not know the name of a *single* Chinese dissident —this, in a population that makes up one-quarter of the human race.

Is Leys too quick to take offense and to denounce? The Washington *Post* of September 18, 1977, carried a story filed from Hong Kong:

> A delegation of 22 American birth-control and child-care experts interviewed here after an extensive tour of five Chinese cities *applauded* [emphasis added] Shanghai's success in encouraging sterilization of couples with two children. . . . Shanghai's system dictates that each woman report her method of birth control to higher authorities and then wait to be told when it is her turn to have children. . . . Family-planning committees set growth quotas for each area, and the women in each unit then meet to decide which of them will be allowed to produce children that year.

Another example: HEW's Assistant Secretary for Education, Mary Berry, recently returned from China to report that in education (of all things), the Chinese "have set a pattern for the world to follow." She went on: "The direction

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of their overall policy—in terms of access to education as well as of redefinition of education as something inextricably linked to the other aspects of human life—should, I believe, represent our basic direction also."

STILL, in spite of such mindless, even scandalous, "applause" by Western liberals for China's totalitarian system, it is possible that, with Mao himself gone from the scene, Maoism may be in for general reexamination. Thus, Ross H. Munro, Peking correspondent of the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, recently wrote a syndicated series on human rights in China, becoming the first Western journalist stationed in Peking to describe the everyday methods of political control—for which he has now been expelled. Even China's own Ministry of Public Security has published a lengthy report acknowledging torture and other abuses.

Then there is the reception accorded *Chinese Shadows* itself. The book has been widely reviewed, and it has provided the opportunity for a surprisingly open discussion of the Chinese political system, even in places where one might not necessarily expect to find it—for example, among Sinologists and other interested academics and intellectuals who customarily eschew criticism of China. The publication of *Chinese Shadows* has even seemed to spark the resumption of an older discussion about Chinese affairs: namely, the perhaps oversimplified debate between those who once believed that traditional Chinese culture—with its strong concern for family, province, and region—would predispose China toward democracy and those who believed its despotic and bureaucratic heritage would incline it toward Communism.

Leys himself asserts that the Maoist system is, so to speak, un-Chinese. He writes that "this leaden mantle weighs upon the shoulders of the people, crushes their creative genius, stifles their traditional qualities of initiative and inventiveness." Because of a "fatal historical accident"—the earlier and atypically isolationist Ming dynasty—China, so Leys writes, "confronted the

NEW FROM...

Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China, 1911–1928

CHINA, JAPAN, AND THE MANCHURIAN IDEA. *Gavan McCormack.* Drawn against the background of Japanese imperialism in Republican China, this account of the career of the most powerful Chinese warlord of his time focuses on Chang's struggle with Japan for control over the military, social, and industrial development of Northeast China. The author attributes Chang's success in retaining power until his assassination in 1928 to three factors: Northeast China's immense wealth, its favorable position in strategic terms, and, surprisingly, the efficiency and sophistication of Chang's civil administration. $16.50

Women in Russia

Edited by Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin & Gail Warshofsky Lapidus. Covering topics as diverse as equal pay for equal work and attitudes toward women of the Russian intelligentsia, the eighteen papers in this book provide an invaluable analysis of Russian women's lives from the earliest times to the present day. Part One focuses on pre-1917 Russia, and includes the first survey in English on the social position of women in Russian history. Parts Two and Three discuss how women have fared during the Soviet period in such areas as economic opportunity, education, the legal system, and politics. $18.75

Nakahara

FAMILY FARMING AND POPULATION IN A JAPANESE VILLAGE, 1717–1830. *Thomas C. Smith.* Why did Japan's population remain static through most of the 250-year Tokugawa period rather than rising in the usual way as productivity rose? This study seeks an answer through analysis of Nakahara's population and tax registers. Though the causes of low mortality remain uncertain, the author shows that low registered fertility was mainly the result of infanticide practiced as a form of family planning and based on the villagers' clear understanding of the relationship between farming efficiency and family size and composition in an intensely competitive agrarian economy. $10.00

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modern world blind and paralyzed," so that "the most civilized people on earth" came ultimately to fall into "a rut . . . unworthy of their calling and their genius."

Leys has been challenged in this, interestingly enough, by John Updike in the *New Yorker*. Updike writes:

> Analyses that base present conditions upon accidents and aberrations seem a bit rickety. A nation of nearly a billion is not that easy to derail into an unworthy rut. There is something in the genius of the people which answers to Maoism. That selfless energy, manifesting itself in destruction and exclusion, in monotony and absurdity, seems still to rage in China, and Mr. Leys, by seeking to dissociate the "inexhaustible humanity" of this subcontinent from the displeasing events within it, leaves something out that we need to know. Maoism must be more than a temporary rut, and its terrifying curtailments of human freedom no mere accident.

There is indeed "something in the genius of the people which answers to Maoism"—as there was something in the genius of the German people which answered to Nazism, or even something in the genius of the Russian people which still answers to Stalinism. Yet just as surely there is more potential for political life in China than this. Establishing the People's Republic of China is not the only memorable achievement of the Chinese people. Are they to be consigned to—will they long remain content with—a regime which so obviously stifles far more of their creative genius than it responds to?

Morality & War

JUST AND UNJUST WARS: A MORAL ARGUMENT WITH HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS. By MICHAEL WALZER. *Basic Books. 361 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR.

Just and Unjust Wars is a thoughtful, generally well-written and lucid, and often but by no means always persuasive essay on the intractable problem of what is moral and immoral in war.

Michael Walzer, a professor of government at Harvard, is by trade a moralist, and so he is not primarily concerned with the international *law* of war, which he prefers to call the "war convention" or the "legal paradigm." He rightly says that that law is "radically incomplete"; it is so largely because the pertinent treaties and customary law represent only the limited and unsubtle part of morality which virtually all the governments of the world accept, or profess to accept. (For example, prisoners of war and civilian noncombatants must not be massacred or deliberately maltreated; there must be some reasonable relationship between the amount of force employed and the military goal to be achieved; and so forth). These rules of law, imperfect as they and their enforcement have been, have probably done more good and avoided more suffering than Professor Walzer seems ready to concede, but no one would claim that they furnish satisfactory answers to all the questions he addresses.

PROFESSOR WALZER aims to supplement, and to some extent revise, the law of war with morality, as he perceives that somewhat elusive concept. It should be said at the outset that he is too sophisticated to be seduced by a number of simple and popular positions on this issue. Unlike the doctrinaire pacifist, he does not believe that war is *ipso facto* and always immoral and that therefore the only moral course is to refuse to participate in any way, to seek peace even at the expense of justice. (George Orwell said, "Those who 'abjure' violence can only do so because others are committing violence on their behalf.")

Like Orwell, he recognizes that Gandhian nonviolence is possible only if one is resisting a more or less civilized and humane adversary. He also avoids the opposite extreme, espoused by Richard Falk and many others among the passionate partisans of North Vietnam, that anything is permissible to a belligerent who (in their opinion) is resisting aggression or otherwise fighting a "just" war. He states clearly and repeatedly that soldiers fighting in an unjust cause have the same rights and duties as their enemies. He refuses to join the "philosophical apologists" for random terrorism.

WHAT, THEN, are his suggestions for improving or transcending the law of war? According to the "legal paradigm," as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Nuremberg Charter, forcible intervention in the internal affairs of another sovereign country or any invasion of its territory, except in self-defense, is a crime. Professor Walzer, however, does not believe that armed intervention is always unjust, or morally wrong. He makes a case for "humanitarian intervention," and suggests a number of situations in which such intervention is morally right—when, within the territory of the nation invaded, a distinct and separate community among its subjects is already waging a "war of national liberation" or attempting to secede; when the invaded nation's government has already permitted a third party to intervene in a civil war; or "when the violation of human rights within a set of boundaries is so terrible that it makes talk of community or self-determination . . . seem cynical and irrelevant." A corollary is that a really immoral state may have no right to defend itself from humanitarian intervention: "If no common life exists, or if the state doesn't defend the common life that does exist, its own defense may have no moral justification."

Professor Walzer also suggests some moral revisions of the law governing the conduct of a war that has already begun. In a "supreme emergency, when the very existence of a community is at stake," it may be "morally as well as militarily necessary to override the rules of war." Likewise, if one is fighting a really evil enemy, like Nazi Germany, one may "do *anything*, violating the rights of the innocent," that is necessary to win.

These theses are defensible and possibly right. Some of them, indeed, are academic, because they clearly represent the practice, if

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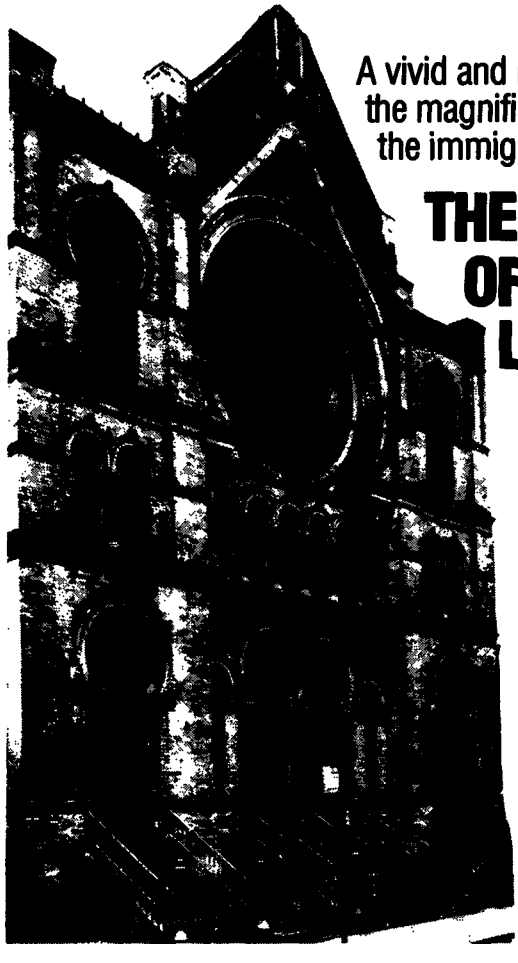
not the law, of nations. Thus, the categorical prohibition of aggression has had little or no effect; since Nuremberg there have been about a hundred wars, some of them on a large scale. All the belligerents have claimed to be acting in self-defense or in the name of justice, usually both, and their friends have usually accepted their explanations. Even in the case of a clear-cut example of aggression, such as the North Korean invasion of South Korea, all the Communist states endorsed Kim Il Sung's contention that he was really defending *his* country against South Korean and American aggression. Similarly, it is hard to imagine a government, however moral, that would not throw away the rulebook in a "supreme emergency." Like domestic laws against adultery and fornication, laws forbidding such conduct are simply unenforceable, and unenforced.

The trouble with all of Professor Walzer's propositions, it seems to me, is that they leave even more room for construction and application in a way that suits the interest of a nation at war, or thinking of going to war, than do the existing treaties and the rest of international law. In each case, their application depends on a finding of fact—for example, the wickedness or illegitimacy of the government of the enemy state—which other observers might find questionable or simply wrong. Where are we to find an honest and disinterested judge of the facts? The plain implication of *Just and Unjust Wars* is that such judgments are best made by Professor Walzer and his peers, detached moralists and philosophers. Unfortunately, Professor Walzer's judgments on one difficult set of facts, those concerning the war in South Vietnam, do not convince me that his moral verdicts are any more objective, any less influenced by his personal political sympathies, than those of people less qualified or less inclined to moralize than he.

To BEGIN with, the position of the United States during the war years that the hostilities in Vietnam started with a North Vietnamese invasion of the South is dismissed by Professor Walzer as "on its surface unbelievable" and "accepted by virtually no one." Yet unless "invasion" is defined in such a way as to exclude the large-scale infiltration of men and weapons into a neighbor's territory, the issue is at the very least debatable; many reasonable people are much less certain than Professor Walzer and might disagree with him. If the issue were before a jury, and I were the judge, I would not direct a verdict.

But however the hostilities be-



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gan, the United States, under Professor Walzer's moral principles, was not entitled to intervene on the side of the government of South Vietnam (although the "counter-intervention" of North Vietnam *was* just), because that government had no "local status" or "political presence independent of ourselves" and hence "could [not] conceivably win a civil war." Here too the issue is not so clear. Whether, in the absence of interference from North Vietnam, the United States, and other states, the government of South Vietnam could have controlled the Vietcong—at least to the extent, say, that the British government has controlled the IRA—must forever remain in the realm of speculation. It is, at the least, conceivable that it could have done so.

"When the South Vietnamese government refused to permit [the elections scheduled for 1956 by the Geneva Agreement of 1954], it clearly lost whatever legitimacy was conferred by those agreements." This assertion strikes me as at best extraordinarily naive. South Vietnam, although hardly a democratic state, was appreciably closer to being one than North Vietnam; there was in 1956 and there remained to the end a substantial and vocal non-Communist opposition, many of whose members were not in jail. Any election in North Vietnam, on the other hand, would have been simply a *Ja*-election, with the Communists getting the customary 99.9 per cent of the "vote."

"A government [like South Vietnam] that receives economic and technical aid, military supply, strategic and tactical advice, and is still unable to reduce its subjects to obedience, is clearly an illegitimate government." The inability of a government to reduce all its subjects to obedience does not prove much about its legitimacy. The British government has not lost its legitimacy because it has not, after nearly a decade, reduced the IRA to obedience and would be no nearer doing so if it had had outside help. For that matter, the Federal Republic of Germany has not lost its legitimacy because it has failed to reduce the Baader-Meinhof gang to obedience.

There are other equally doubtful assertions about Vietnam in this book, including one that the Vietcong enjoyed the voluntary support of the entire peasantry in the South, partly because of what the author delicately terms "the enforced intimacy" between the peasants and the guerrillas. Some of these assertions look rather odd in the light of the reports that have come out of that unhappy country in the last year or so.

BUT it is not my intention to counter Professor Walzer's dogmatics by dogmatizing myself. The rights and wrongs of Vietnam rest on questions of fact which will in all probability never be fully resolved, in part because they were so incompetently and one-sidedly reported while the war was going on. The point is that Professor Walzer finds moral justification for violence—in this case, the violence of the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong—when his own prejudices are cast into the scales, and when the evidence would not permit an honest man to find *legal* justification for violence.

Where would Professor Walzer's moral intuitions lead him in various contemporary situations? He cites Nazi Germany as a clear case for "humanitarian intervention." Today there seems to be very strong, virtually conclusive, evidence that the government of Cambodia (a country which Professor Walzer spares himself embarrassment by never mentioning) is as bad as Hitler's. Incredible as it sounds, it may actually be worse quantitatively, for the best evidence is that it has so far killed about one-eighth of its subjects, a figure Hitler never managed to reach. Would Professor Walzer favor armed "humanitarian intervention" to stop the killing there? What about Uganda, Guinea, Ethiopia, Chile, South Africa? I mention only nations small enough so that intervention by the great powers would be militarily feasible, but even in the case of these it is painfully clear that the great powers, if they were to apply the Walzer principles of morality, would each come to an utterly different conclusion. Russia and Cuba, for example, might justify the Cuban military presence in Angola and other African countries on the basis of "humanitarian intervention," but the United States would not, and neither would I.

THIS brings me to the crux of the difference between Professor Walzer and myself. He takes me to task for saying in an article on the *law* of war ("The Question of War Crimes," COMMENTARY, December 1972) that I would "make no attempt to say what is immoral—not because I think morality unimportant, but because my views on it are entitled to no more weight than Jane Fonda's or Richard M. Nixon's or yours." Professor Walzer says that I am wrong to think that "all opinions are equal" and that "moral authority" does not exist. But I do not really think that all opinions are equal. I find some, especially my own, more persuasive than others—but not because they are "authoritative" in the sense that law is authoritative. Of course "moral authority" exists. It is possessed, to select a few examples, by the Pope, by the President of the Council of Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, and possibly by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of this or that Marxist state. Unfortunately, these people do not always agree with one another, with Professor Walzer, or with me, and not all of us recognize the authority of any of them.

If I want to find what the *law* is, at least I know where to look for it. But if I am not a Roman Catholic, or a Mormon, or a Moonie, or a Communist, where shall I look for moral authority? Professor Walzer's answer is straightforward and free of false modesty: I should go to Harvard University and knock on his door. "No one can argue about justice and war, as I have been doing, without striving for an authoritative voice and laying claim to a certain 'weightiness.'" In the light of many of the moral verdicts handed down in *Just and Unjust Wars*, I remain skeptical. Persuasiveness, yes—sometimes. Authority, no.

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The U.S. & the Middle East

THE POLITICS OF DEFEAT: AMERICA'S DECLINE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. By JOSEPH CHURBA. Introduction by ELMO R. ZUMWALT. *Cyrco Press. 224 pp. $10.00.*

HONOR THE PROMISE: AMERICA'S COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL. By ROBERT F. DRINAN. *Doubleday. 250 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL LEDEEN

NO MATTER what happens between Egypt and Israel in the near future, these two stimulating and useful books about Israel and the United States are not likely to become obsolete. They are quite different from one another. Joseph Churba, former intelligence chief of the air force, writes almost exclusively about the strategic importance of Israel. Father Drinan, a Jesuit and Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts, writes almost exclusively about moral and religious questions in the Middle East. But taken together, they add up to a devastating indictment of American diplomacy, an indictment which appears increasingly accurate with each passing day. Churba charges the United States with failing to perceive its strategic interests in the Middle East; Father Drinan condemns Christianity and Islam for failing to recognize the moral and religious integrity of Zionism, and accuses the United States of threatening the existence of Israel. Both call upon America to support Israel to the hilt.

Churba's book is typical of that school of thought which sees the Middle East as a segment of a global chessboard, and views every move there as if it were being made —directly or indirectly—by either the Soviet Union or the United States. Everything that happens, whether by plan or inadvertence, by stratagem or coincidence, fits into this strategic scorecard on which there are only two players.

There is much to recommend this approach, particularly since, in the

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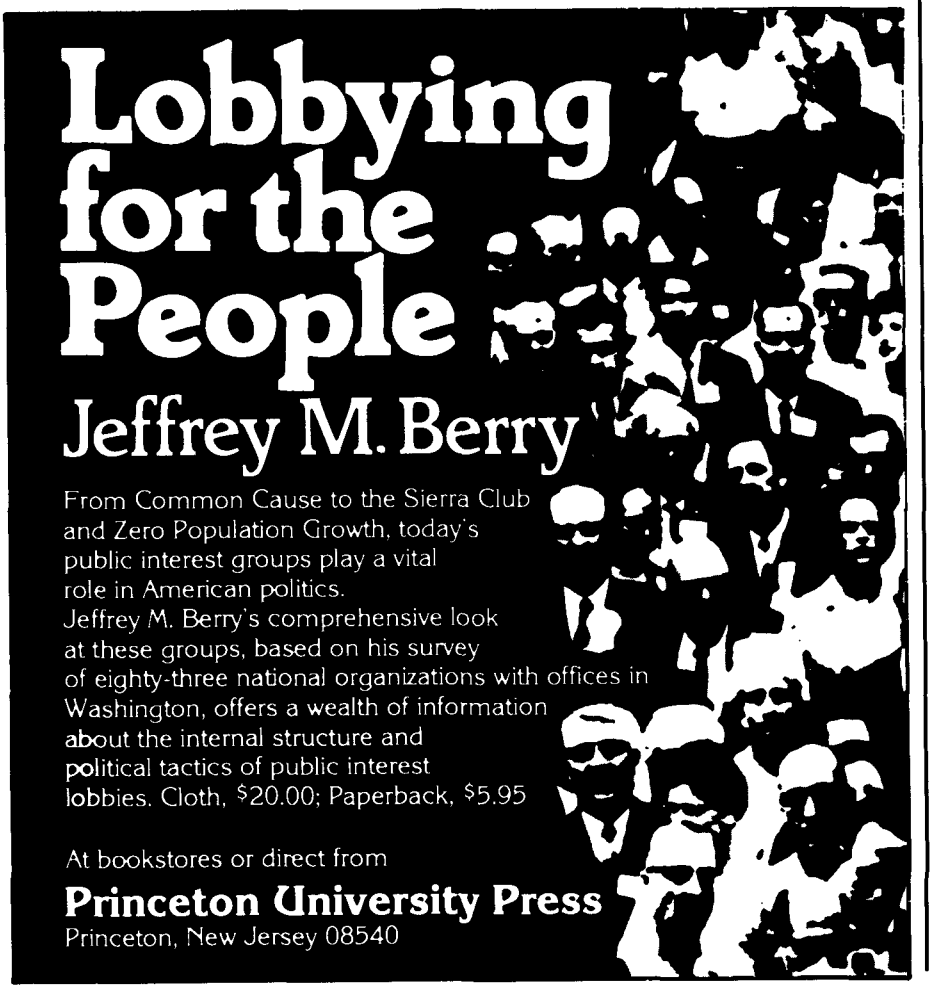
Carter administration, geopolitics of Churba's kind is considered passé, if not immoral. Thus, one must admire Churba's prescience for observing, several months before the U.S.-USSR joint declaration on the Middle East, that

> some American pundits in a moment of misconception have proposed that a viable solution for peace in the Middle East must incorporate the Soviet Union as a party. In reality, this approach is the sure way to guarantee failure so long as the Soviet Union retains its continuing imperial dreams against the liberal democracies.

This goes hand in hand with Churba's warning that an independent Palestinian state would only "serve as a Soviet *agent provocateur*."

Churba is also on the mark concerning the administration's passion for a "comprehensive settlement" of the Middle East conflict—which in practice probably means no settlement at all, as Anwar Sadat must have concluded before making his dramatic visit to Jerusalem. On the altogether reasonable ground that "negotiations [should] be the result of a determination by the parties that accommodation serves their respective national interests," Churba calls for the two superpowers to get out of the way of the contending states and permit Arabs and Israelis to conduct negotiations by themselves. This sort of analysis is like a breath of fresh air in the steamy atmosphere of an administration which has been bent on forcing everyone in the Middle East to the Geneva conference rooms.

Finally, Churba specifies what he calls the "pillars for stability" in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, and a secure Israel. To these he adds the creation of a stable Christian Lebanon. Yet this proposal, which amounts to a plan for what would be just a mirror image of the Palestinian state advocated by others, suggests that Churba does not fully appreciate either the history or the current realities of the Middle East, and it points to a shortcoming in his overall approach. He understands that Israel is of crucial importance to the United States; he sees that we have often been outmaneuvered; he recognizes that the Soviets have a clearer perception of the possible gains and losses than we—and yet there is an important missing ingredient here. One simply does not have a sense in reading Churba of the passions of the *immediate* parties to the conflict, namely, Israel and the Arabs. Significantly, he provides no detailed discussion of the important role of Saudi Arabia in bankrolling the PLO, for example. Is this, as some have suggested, protection money? Is it, as others believe, an attempt to create a praetorian guard for a projected Saudi empire? Or does it betoken a search for the decisive weapon in a holy war against the Jews?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This last possibility, interestingly enough, is raised by Father Drinan, a Jesuit priest who may be best remembered for his relentless opposition to the Vietnam war and his campaign against Richard Nixon. *Honor the Promise* is an unexpectedly elegant book. In it, Father Drinan argues that Israel's existence is a moral imperative for Christianity, that America's policies (especially the sale of arms to Israel's Arab enemies) threaten Israeli security, and that Christianity must rally to support Israel and the Zionist cause.

There are moments when one has the sensation of reading a latter-day Theodor Herzl:

> The unique feature of anti-Semitism is that it has metastasized into the entire universe. The contempt for the Jews which persisted through all of the Christian centuries has infected the United Nations, where the international wrath reserved uniquely for the state of Israel finds no parallel or precedent in time or place.

Father Drinan spares no one in his diatribe against Christian anti-

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Semites, from the Popes to Luther, from Christians in the Arab world (who, he says, "constitute a force seeking to deter Christians outside of the Arab world from recognizing the legitimacy of Israel") to the United Nations vote which condemned Zionism as racism ("the most public trial of Jews and Judaism in the history of mankind"). He endorses Herzl's conclusion of seventy years ago that the Jews can find no peace in a Christian world, and that a Jewish state, Israel, is the only solution to the Jewish predicament. He insists that Christians, and particularly American Christians, study, understand, and support Zionism, and that they recognize the moral significance of the state of Israel.

BUT *Honor the Promise* is not merely an exercise in moral theology. Its author sits in the House of Representatives and understands the nature of political power. Thus, his chapters on American arms shipments to Arab countries and on the practices of American corporations (from active collaboration with the anti-Jewish boycott to joint conspiracy with the Arabs to inflate oil prices at the expense of Western security) are among the best in the book. His conclusion is that "moral indignation at the tactics of the super-rich Arab nations is pervasive in the Congress and in the country, but it is apparently insufficient to overcome the grasping desires of corporations and banks to secure the lavish profits. . . ." This, although very alarming, is nonetheless not nearly so grave as America's arming of Israel's Arab enemies, an effort that Father Drinan rightly says "has terrorized, impoverished, and confused the people of Israel."

Finally, Father Drinan performs a political analysis of the Palestinian question that might have come from Menahem Begin himself. The PLO, he says, is not a national-liberation organization; it is not supported by a majority of the Palestinians living in "occupied territories"; its hypocrisy is demonstrated by its constant calls for the elimination of both Israel and Jordan from the Middle East; and its legitimacy is undermined by the close ties it maintains to the Soviet Union. Like Churba, Father Drinan is convinced that "the establishment of a new Palestinian state would carry with it the possibility and perhaps the certainty such such a nation would be used by the USSR to gain additional military and political leverage."

WHY, then, is there support for the PLO in the American government? The answer is simple: oil. The United States has dug a trap for itself, from which escape will be possible only if the country is prepared to make substantial sacrifices on behalf of Israel, or undertakes a drastic change in overall policy. Father Drinan, virtually alone even among pro-Israel analysts, spells out the degree to which American national interests, insofar as they consist in the flow of Middle Eastern oil to this country, are in direct conflict with Israel's interests. He has the courage to face this head on, and declare his own choice:

> America's commitment to Israel cannot and will not be kept unless Christians . . . recognize that the Christians of this generation —especially in America—are called upon by their religion and by their government to undertake *whatever extraordinary remedies* might be necessary to protect Israel, a nation made necessary by the Holocaust acquiesced in by most of the world's Christians [emphasis added].

One confesses to amazement at this book. In an impassioned introduction, Elie Wiesel expresses his admiration of Father Drinan, and reminds him that Jews, above all other peoples, cherish their friends and benefactors. One may add a further note: is it not somehow symptomatic of the confusion of our times that a Jesuit priest, writing primarily about theological and religious questions, has produced a political analysis superior to that of the former head of air-force intelligence?

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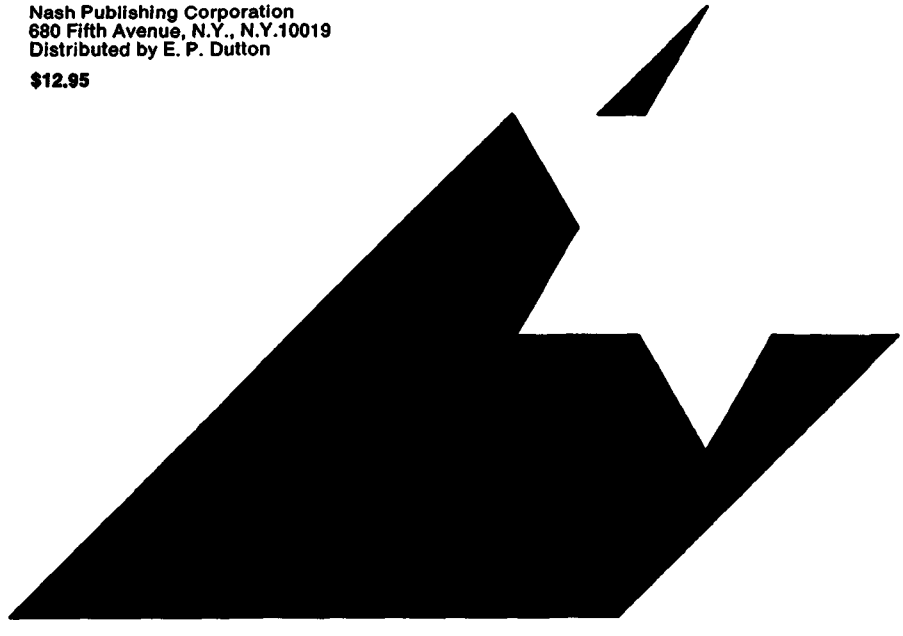

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The Car & Its Enemies

THE WAR AGAINST THE AUTOMOBILE. By B. BRUCE-BRIGGS. *Dutton. 239 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

MOST Americans, in company with an ever-growing number of other inhabitants of the world, regard private automotive transport as a fundamental constituent of the good life, coming just after food in importance, and paid for much more cheerfully than shelter. But while Americans, and people generally, buy new new cars and new old cars with the happy persistence of cigarette smokers hooked on their habit, and then invest heavily in attachments and accessories to make these cars even more splendid, our social physicians preach incessantly that cars are killing us. We are told that we risk our lives by speeding and other avoidable hazards; that we are poisoning our lungs with the noxious effluents of the "infernal" combustion engine; and, worst of all, that we are destroying the environment, both urban and rural, by enslaving it to the demands of motor traffic.

In *The War Against the Automobile,* B. Bruce-Briggs undertakes at least two badly needed services. The first is to evaluate the strictures raised against the automobile by its articulate enemies. He leaves few of these standing. The second is to explain why the enemies of the automobile feel as they do. Here he is somewhat less successful.

Bruce-Briggs goes about the first task by separating what he calls the "phony costs" of the automobile from its true costs. As evidence of the former he lists a number of charges which may be described as animistic heresies, because in them the automobile is seen as embodying some peculiar anti-human quality. Thus, Bruce-Briggs dismisses the idea that automobiles discriminate against the poor and immobilize low-income families by destroying so-called mass transit. He tells us, rather, that 85 per cent of American households have the use of private automobiles, and the remaining 15 per cent are by no means all poor. Rather than immobilizing the poor, the automobile has given low-income working people access to factories which have, in an evolutionary pattern, moved away from the cramped central-city locations that mass-transit systems were designed to serve. Similarly, Bruce-Briggs derides the idea that the automobile is highly subsidized, arguing that its users pay a remarkably high proportion of the public costs of this form of transport; the taxes generated by automobile use, on the other hand, are unfairly distributed among several layers of American government. He also draws attention to the difficulty of pinning down both the external costs of the automobile (like the consumption of land for roads) which its critics point to, and its external benefits (like increases in land value) which they remain silent about.

Bruce-Briggs also deals with the "phony costs" attributable to the collective animism which automobile critics bundle under the name "Detroit." Detroit, he says, is not a place where evil men seek to impose their will on their countrymen by misdesigning automobiles, refusing to innovate designs, and cultivating indifference to safety. Rather, American automobiles are designed to the customers' tastes, which vary from region to region. The relatively large automobile produced in Detroit is well adapted to the long, flat, relatively curveless roads of Middle America. The annual model changes are far less wasteful than is generally supposed, and are related to the rate at which the dies and other tools of automobile manufacturing wear out. Nor does Detroit deliberately plan quick obsolescence. The average American car, in fact, provides its several owners with 100,000 miles of service. The notion that Detroit forces cars down the throats of an unwilling public, and that advertising rigidly controls popular tastes, is, in the author's view, not in accord with the facts. It may be noteworthy that Bruce-Briggs de-

ROGER STARR, *a member of the New York* Times *Editorial Board, is the author of* America's Housing Challenge, *among other works.*

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fends Detroit's unwillingness to concentrate on the production of small cars even though his own taste runs to them—he drives a Honda.

THE important and true costs of the automobile are three, according to the author: its effect on air quality, the toll of dead and injured from its operation, and the amount of fuel it consumes. Here, too, he asserts, critics have a poor case. For example, the evidence that automobile emissions are actually dangerous to human life is grossly insufficient to justify the large expenditure on anti-pollution devices that Congress has legislated. There is no proof that carbon monoxide, even in the concentrations found in the densest urban traffic centers, is measurably harmful to health, and as for the other major effluents, nitrogen oxides, no one knows how dangerous they are, or whether they are dangerous at all in the concentrations produced by automobiles on the street. It is, rather, the public detestation of smog, produced by the combination of carbon monoxide and the nitrogen oxides under appropriate atmospheric conditions, which has led Congress to enact standards for eliminating both from automotive exhausts. Yet, as Bruce-Briggs shows, the standards set by Congress cannot be met by present technology, and the effective date for meeting them must continually be postponed; the result is a classic case of a problem created by government attempts to regulate an issue that was misdefined in the first place.

On the question of safety, Bruce-Briggs asserts that automobile driving is less dangerous than it used to be. The actual number of injuries and deaths per passenger mile is so low that it is no wonder people are reluctant to protect themselves against hazards they can barely perceive. According to Bruce-Briggs, today's lower accident rates are due to better drivers and better roads (and to the aging of the population), and the picture might be better still if the government did not intervene by establishing safety standards that do not address the major dangers of driving.

Bruce-Briggs is less satisfactory in his discussion of the automobile's appetite for petroleum products. Following the analyses of the Hudson Institute (where he has been a staff member), he simply assures us that the OPEC cartel cannot last indefinitely, and that in any case the problem of fuel will eventually find some sort of solution.

IN contrast to its generally admirable treatment of the credits and debits, mostly credits, in the ledger of the automobile, this book falters somewhat in trying to explain why anti-automobile feeling has grown to the size it has in the academic and literary world, and among the social-policy elites. Bruce-Briggs argues that the economic position of the upper class has been imperiled by the mass ownership of cars, which has made it harder for the "best" people to get back and forth between town and country. In order to sustain land values, the elites have engaged in a conspiracy to undermine the public pleasure in automobile driving, and to encourage the expenditure of vast sums of government money in the construction and maintenance of inefficient rail-commuter systems.

This argument from economic determinism seems to me a bit limited. I would tend to place the emphasis rather in the realm of culture, in that same complex of anti-industrial, anti-democratic attitudes that in the modern period has greeted every new mechanical simplification of the tasks of ordinary living with a chorus of denunciation, and that has been repelled by the gross proliferation of goods available to the average household. In the case of automobiles, resentment has focused particularly on that quality for which Bruce-Briggs rightly praises them: the power they give to individuals to exercise maximum control over their own movements.

Enemies of the automobile correctly perceive that it offers unique freedoms to millions of people who would otherwise be denied such freedoms. The distribution by society of so profoundly liberating a force is bound to have a disintegrative effect on the order of things as they are, and on the order of values as they are. The tacit recognition of this truth is, I think, what lies be-

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hind the reluctance of the Soviets to allow widespread ownership of cars in *their* society, and also, if at a much more advanced stage, what lies behind the war against the automobile in our own. The gradually increasing list of restrictions and punitive measures which our elites seek to impose on the mass exercise of the freedom of choice offered by the automobile constitutes a kind of retaliation against democracy itself for the gifts it has conferred on us. This movement of retaliation has been late in coming, but it is now here with a vengeance.

Justice Remembered

THE MEMOIRS OF EARL WARREN. By EARL WARREN. Prologue and Epilogue by the EDITORS. *Doubleday. 394 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM J. BENNETT

HEINRICH HEINE once observed that the reason no one had written a biography of Immanuel Kant was that he did not have one. It would be unjust to say the same of the late Earl Warren—his "memoirs" do have their moments—but on the whole this book is bland reading.

As Warren tells it, his life followed a straight-line development. Generous, hard-working, morally upright, he was a man who never changed his vision of things or altered his sense of right and wrong, good and evil. The world of characters in this book neatly divides into conscientious public servants on the one hand, and self-seeking enemies of society on the other. (Warren tells us that early in his life he formed a view of corporations as evil and monopolistic; later in his career, the list was expanded to include Southern Congressmen, detractors of the Court, and other "reactionaries.") Throughout, there is no doubt about the motives and failings of those whom Warren opposes, be they criminals or conservatives, as there is no doubt about his own virtues and right opinions.

Though possessed, he tells us, of a pure heart and a clear vision, Warren does not lay claim to great intellectual gifts; his grades in college were strong in history, political science, and English, but very low in foreign languages and mathematics. He was not a man inclined to learning, and his memoirs are empty of reference to any of the great Western ideas in philosophy, history, politics, or law. But if not a man of learning, he was, he avers, a man of sense, and also of sentiment. In the army, when asked by the captain of his company to grade candidates applying for officer-status, Warren demurred: he did not want to be "the means of anyone failing." As a district attorney, he fought hard for guilty pleas in the cases he prosecuted, but always felt bad whenever such a verdict was given. His account of the murder of his own father is almost unbelievably placid.

In short, the story of Earl Warren—district attorney, attorney general and governor of California, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, chairman of the Warren Commission—sounds like nothing so much as a modern-day *Pilgrim's Progress,* in which Christian, as an optimistic Californian, makes his stalwart way through the 20th-century Slough of Despond. Certainly there is a great distance between this book and the sorts of books by and about Justices of the Supreme Court that have become common nowadays, such as the recently published memoirs of Felix Frankfurter* and the new biography of Justice Black.† In Warren's account of his life there are no personal scandals or transgressions, no history of membership in unseemly organizations, not a hint of deviation from the path of dedicated public service, scarcely a hint of bad judgment.

The most interesting parts of the book are Warren's descriptions of the bunko artists, corrupt politicians, racketeers, and other criminals he and his raiders pursued when he was a district attorney and then attorney general of California. There are good stories here, and a good account of the tenacity of a small but energetic staff dealing effectively with organized crime.

Students of the Supreme Court, on the other hand, will find little new or arresting in the book. There are the familiar words of praise, including self-praise, for *Brown* v. *Board of Education,* where praise is deserved, and for *Baker* v. *Carr,* the "one man, one vote" decision Warren regards as his most important, where praise is not so clearly deserved. Warren does confess to being completely unprepared for his work on the Court at the time he was named Chief Justice, and in this unprepared state he was thrown into the deliberations of *Brown.* But throughout his Court cases, he was sure enough of his ground always to stand against "hysteria" and "overzealousness"—by which he appears to mean any opposition to or criticism of the Warren Court's decisions. Paul Freund has said that Justice Brandeis joined morality of heart to morality of mind. On the Warren Court, morality of heart was predominant.

WE ARE told by the anonymous editors of this book that Warren wrote his "memoirs" when he was over eighty years old, and the book is hence an apology in the root sense—a justification of his actions throughout his life. During his term on the Court and later, as chairman of the Warren Commission, Warren was strongly and stoically silent in the face of criticism, some of it vicious. Given the opportunity to speak for himself and against his critics, he understandably does just that, attempting, on the whole quite successfully, to convince the reader that he was a decent and well-intentioned man.

But his editors cannot leave it at that. In a prologue and epilogue, they identify Warren with everything *they* appear to think he would have approved of, and they even provide a check-list. Thus, we are told that Warren "felt the freshening winds of rebellion when they began to blow with the student movement of the '60s"; that "he was resolute in bringing about improve-

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* *From the Diaries of Felix Frankfurter,* edited by Joseph Lash, Norton, 356 pp., $12.50.

† *Hugo Black and the Judicial Revolution,* by Gerald T. Dunne, Simon & Schuster, 492 pp., $12.50.

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ments in the protection of the consumer at the mercy of monopolistic corporations," and of "the non-religious at the mercy of organized religion," and of "the protester at the mercy of whatever forces would suppress his or her [*sic*] small voice." He supposedly did all this, moreover, with a stolidity made possible by "his basic beliefs, which were rooted in his hardworking, injustice-hating proletarian childhood." Even on those few occasions when he failed to decide "correctly," as when he sided with a Board of Regents (in *Barsky*) against an individual, his editors assure us that "he adjusted, as if with the aid of a humanistic gyrocompass, to a more liberal course soon after."

This editorial remolding of Warren raises a suspicion. The book bears an announcement that "a certain amount of editorial tinkering and checking was required" on the *memoirs themselves* before they were ready for public consumption, but that "the original manuscript can be made available for inspection." After four months and several phone calls and letters, my request to be allowed to inspect the manuscript was finally answered by a letter that said Mrs. Warren would be asked to give me permission to review the manuscript if I had "plans to come to Washington." Why this runaround from Doubleday? Is it conceivable that the Earl Warren on whose memoirs these "memoirs" are based was different from the paragon of piety presented here? Exactly who wrote these "memoirs," and what are we reading when we read them?

The Light that Failed

DELMORE SCHWARTZ: THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN POET. By JAMES ATLAS. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 418 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by PETER SHAW

DELMORE SCHWARTZ burst upon the literary world in 1937, when his story, "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," was selected as the lead offering in the first issue of the new *Partisan Review*. Immediately he was hailed by the chief poets and critics of America and England, among them R.P. Blackmur, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Mark Van Doren. Soon he was in correspondence with admirers like W.H. Auden, Van Wyck Brooks, T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound. Although there was little likelihood that his cerebral poems, stories, verse plays, and reviews would ever become popular, whatever the twenty-three-year-old Schwartz wrote was published and acclaimed.

The response to his precocity was quite as remarkable as the brilliance of this young man's first stories and poems, which he never surpassed. And so was the impact that he made upon the people with whom he soon came into contact in New York, at Harvard where he began to teach, and at the writers' colonies. From the first, he monopolized and bullied friends, drawing them into the web of his complicated plans for self-aggrandizement, his always unhappy love affairs and marriages, and the increasing depression and paranoia that lasted until his death from a heart attack in a cheap Manhattan hotel in 1966. They remained loyal even in the face of his denunciations, securing him teaching jobs, grants, lecture invitations, and places in anthologies. (By 1947 he was the most anthologized poet of his generation.)

Since his death, he has been the subject of memoirs by his contemporaries, William Barrett (COMMENTARY, September 1974), Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, Dwight Macdonald, and Philip Rahv. He figures importantly in poems by Robert Lowell and by John Berryman, who for a while in the 40's was his Boswell. There are unpublished manuscripts about him by Harry Levin of Harvard and by Sidney Hook, the latter titled "Delmore Schwartz as a Student." James Atlas has drawn on these materials, along with unpublished journals and letters, to produce a balanced account of a notoriously unbalanced life.

Despite his impact on other

PETER SHAW *is the author of* The Character of John Adams, *which has just been released as a Norton paperback.*

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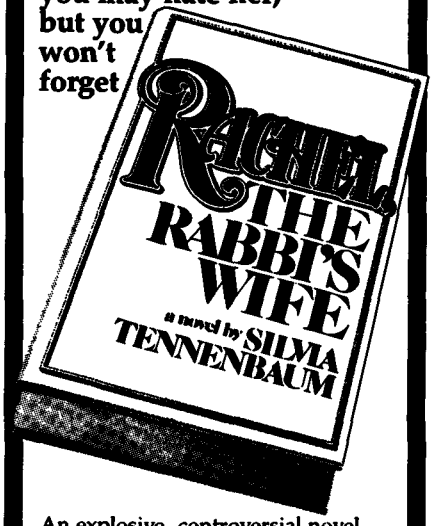

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writers, Delmore Schwartz left few works of permanent interest. Among these are his first story, a few stunningly evocative lyric poems, and possibly some of the hundreds of literary reviews and essays that he turned out with undiminished professional competence between 1935 and 1962. Though for the most part he wrote about himself, he was a poet of abstractions. In his poem, "The World Was Warm and White When I Was Born," for example, he speaks of his birth in the summer of 1914, but instead of details about a particular life, he concentrates on the abstractions of the title, on the future and the past, and on the love of truth which becomes the truth of love. The abstraction, love, comes into many a poem of depression and loss, too often creating a simplistic polarity between cynicism and sentimentality. Schwartz departed at his peril from the theme of failure, which, as Atlas points out, he had made his own before he was twenty-five.

As a poet, Schwartz suffered an important limitation. He was a traditionalist as well as a modern. His settings, themes, and subjects are all derived from the modern masters, and everywhere in his poems one hears echoes of Yeats, Eliot, Hart Crane, and Wallace Stevens. But his poetics are those of Milton, Shakespeare, and the lyric tradition of the 19th century. Thus, he encourages a comparison of his work with the greatest English poems, while at the same time having made it impossible for himself to write in any startlingly new way—the very thing he wanted most to accomplish. In an early sonnet, for example, he speaks of the self's ignorance of what "Is safe, blue, right, cold, blind, soft, real and hot." The line's abstractions and meter are both under control, but technically it is more traditional than daring.

The irony here lies in the fact that if Delmore Schwartz's literary generation is to be believed, his was its most original spirit. He compelled friends into his orbit chiefly by the brilliance of his talk, which seemed to herald a new intellectual and artistic style. Its power lay in the surprising juxtaposition of abstract rhetoric with the mundane concerns of popular culture and a liberal sprinkling of colloquial pithiness. Saul Bellow captured it when he placed Schwartz at the center of *Humboldt's Gift:*

> He was simply the Mozart of conversation. . . . His spiel took in Freud, Heine, Wagner, Goethe in Italy, Lenin's dead brother, Wild Bill Hickock's costumes, the New York Giants, Ring Lardner on grand opera, Swinburne on flagellation, and John D. Rockefeller on religion.

This was what came to be known as the *Partisan Review* style. If Delmore Schwartz did not originate that style, his speech, as far as his contemporaries were concerned, was its most perfect realization.

Yet Schwartz believed that the vulgarities of popular culture had no place in great literature, and he struggled all his life to keep them out of his writing. At seventeen, he resolved "to see no moving pictures, read no cheap books, listen to no catgut music at all." And in whatever he wrote, he conscientiously excised such matters. Furthermore, as the young English teacher in the story, "A Bitter Farce," explains to a student: "To use words like crack or words like wangle is to succumb to slang usages. You can be simple, natural, and direct without using slang." Delmore Schwartz's stories are all of these things, but often they are also dull. Seldom in their language or content does one find more than a hint of what made *him* so interesting: his baseball statistics, odd lore garnered from reading the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and whatever it was he found in the *Police Gazettes* and girlie magazines that littered his floor and the back of his car.

All of his life, Delmore Schwartz struggled to find what he called "a different light"—the secret of originality that would permit him to join the great figures of modern literature. And all the while he was systematically extinguishing the colloquial originality that had already been granted him. As a writer, he succeeded in making himself, in the final analysis, conventional. Why? Possibly as a result of his rage for fame, which was identical for him with entering the mainstream of English literature. He may have feared to be daring lest he fail or appear unserious.

THROUGHOUT the 40's, Schwartz abandoned lyric poetry to labor over a verse play about the first seven years of his life, unpublished novels about the intellectual circles he moved in, and a book on T. S. Eliot. In no case did he discover how to incorporate into his work the brilliance of his conversation, or his vision of the mundane. It remained for others to perfect the *Partisan Review* style in criticism and to give it life in fiction. Its elements come together in *Humboldt's Gift,* which must be considered Delmore Schwartz's apotheosis. At the beginning of the novel, Humboldt/Delmore drives the narrator to New Jersey, discussing along the way "machinery, luxury, command, capitalism, technology, Mammon, Orpheus and poetry, the riches of the human heart, America, world civilization. His task was to put all of this and more, together." In Bellow's novel as in life, Humboldt/Delmore never succeeds in this task, but as the drive continues, Bellow demonstrates how it might have been done:

> The car went snoring and squealing through the tunnel and came out in bright sunlight. Tall stacks, a filth artillery, fired silently into the Sunday sky with beautiful bursts of smoke. The acid smell of gas refineries went into your lungs like a spur. The rushes were as brown as onion soup.

You can be simple, natural, and direct without using words like snore and squeal, but that is all you will be. Bellow's poetry of the immediate, perhaps because it lay too close at hand, always eluded Delmore Schwartz. He imagined that he could be an exception, a "genius" with "blazing gifts lighting the world." He ended instead as a representative figure of his age and milieu.

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